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Retirement age



Shannon Fagan

President Bush's National Energy Strategy would push nation's oldest reactor past its prime.

**Shannon Fagan reports
page 11**



Pope John Paul II takes on capitalism

By Kevin Kelly

When Pope John Paul II issued his encyclical *Centesimus Annus* (the 100th year) this past spring, Catholic conservatives were quick to celebrate. John Paul's essay on economic life, they claimed, had undone the criticisms of the American economic system leveled by the U.S. Catholic Bishops Conference five years ago in its path-breaking letter "Economic Justice for All." Conservative Catholic writer Richard John Neuhaus exclaimed in the *Wall Street Journal* that the pope believed "capitalism is the economic corollary of the Christian understanding of man's nature and destiny."

Not so fast. Though conservative Catholics moved quickly to put their free-market spin on the pope's teaching, they broadly misrepresented its meaning. Like other Catholic Church leaders before him, the pope certainly affirmed the potential freedom and prosperity enjoyed inside market economies. But he also broadly lashed out at consumerism and protested the individualism fostered by Western-style economies. "Consumer attitudes and life-styles can be created which are...damaging to physical and spiritual health," he wrote.

Hardly a ringing endorsement of Madison Avenue jingles. The encyclical, issued in May to celebrate the 100th

anniversary of Pope Leo XIII's letter "Rerum Novarum," which advocated sweeping reforms to better the lives of the working classes, also reasserts the importance of labor unions. It claims that all people have the right to employment and a just wage and access to some control over their working lives and the means of production. Workers and the poor, the document asserts, "have the right to possess the things necessary for one's personal development."

Fertile ground: Why is any of this important? As more and more governments embrace free-market economies and Reagan-era social policies, the Catholic Church is tilling fertile ground for those who think differently. By asserting that the promotion of "human dignity" is the measure of any society, the Catholic Church delivers a devastating critique of current Western economic mores just as most established powers celebrate their triumph. "The pope's approach to capitalism," says Milwaukee Archbishop Rembert Weakland, "is to insist that it needs to be controlled and limited by forces outside it."

This isn't just about solace for defeated progressives. The encyclical gives much ammunition to those wishing to defend the rights of unions and the pursuit of economic justice. The labor movement should welcome—and proclaim—the document's unambiguous recognition of labor's moral authority. And importantly, as the nation's 50 million Catholics and their leaders digest the encyclical's message, they'll have to confront teachings terribly at odds with the prevailing wisdom in the U.S. "It offers profound challenges," admits Bishop James Malone of Youngstown, Pa.

Mind you, this encyclical isn't scintillating reading. The 113-page document, considered a teaching of the highest order, is peppered with theology and references to God and the Gospels—not exactly a standard political tract. But it does offer an excellent chapter on the fall of the Eastern bloc (titled "The Year 1989"), and much of it is written with keen appreciation for progressive critiques of capitalism. The section on consumerism, for instance, takes as its starting point the tendency of consumer society to turn everything, no matter how intimate, into a commodity—a point straight out of radical political economics.

But the encyclical doesn't embrace an entirely straightforward progressive platform, either. The pope embraces markets as the best mechanism to regulate economic life and supports limiting the activities of the state. Moreover, he is a harsh and unwavering critic of those who act in the name of class struggle or, in most cases, those who seek to expropriate property from the wealthy.

Keeping with the church's history, the pope stresses the need to limit the functions of the state. In other words, the state is supposed to take a back seat to private, voluntary activities of individuals.

At root, this is actually a radical proposal. People are

called to be citizens, to formulate the laws they live by and take responsibility for building communities shaped by a moral code that emphasizes human dignity and development. Unfortunately, it fails to consider the enormous power corporations wield in shaping society today and the essential countervailing role states often play in fostering a different agenda. But the pope's statements on citizenship and the state are in many ways radically democratic and point to overhaul of apathetic and centralized political cultures.

The pope follows a long line of Catholic leaders in condemning class struggle as well. "What is condemned in class struggle," he says, "is the idea that the conflict is not restrained by ethical or juridical consideration or by respect for the dignity of others." Instead, Catholic teaching asserts that labor and capital must coexist, though capital ought always be a tool that workers use to build a better world.

The principle of solidarity: There are many useful ideas here. Throughout the document, the pope emphasizes the "principle of solidarity." The rich are continually encouraged to acknowledge their responsibilities to the poor, at home and abroad. He lauds reforms such as Social Security, pensions, health insurance and workers' compensation. And while he acknowledges the role of the state in achieving these reforms, he believes free trade unions played the indispensable role.

The encyclical's generous treatment of trade unions is impressive. Though they have already won for workers many of the reforms advocated by Pope Leo XIII, "the pope emphasizes that there is still a need for a strong and effective labor movement," says Rev. George Higgins, a theologian at Catholic University in Washington, D.C. Unions, writes the pope, are "places where workers

INSIDE STORY

can express themselves. They serve the development of an authentic culture of work and help workers share in a fully human way in the life of their places of employment."

Profit, while being a proper aim of business, says the pope, shouldn't be its highest goal. Instead, he emphasizes the central role of work in human development and the crucial function unions play in building better lives for workers. He acknowledges "the legitimacy of workers' efforts to obtain full respect for their dignity and to gain broader areas of participation in the life of industrial enterprises so that, while cooperating with others and under the direction of others, they can in a certain sense 'work for themselves' through the exercise of their intelligence and freedom." It would be hard for any corporate executive to read this as anything other than a call for cooperative management.

Free markets run amok come in for a stinging rebuke. "Of itself," he writes, "an economic system does not possess the criteria for correctly distinguishing new and higher forms of satisfying human needs from artificial new needs which hinder the formation of a mature personality." It isn't up to the marketing chief and advertising executives to define needs, he insists. That's something an informed and politically astute populace must do.

While arguing that the worst forms of exploitation have been eradicated in the West, the pope warns that alienation is in full bloom. "A person who is concerned solely with possessing and enjoying," he says, "who is no longer capable of controlling his instincts or passions ... cannot be free." Hardly the kind of "Don't Worry, Be Happy" life advocated by many in Washington these days.

Given the many interesting ideas in the encyclical, and its well-thought-out critique of modern society, it is sad that many won't take it seriously because of the pope's stands on such matters as birth control and abortion. "People could learn a lot," says one Catholic theologian, "if they aren't too turned off by him." If nothing else, the encyclical could provide useful fodder for those looking to change the terms of debate closer to home.

Kevin Kelly is a writer living in Chicago.

CONTENTS

Inside Story: The Pope's progressive economic policy	2
Russian reformers form new wing of Communist Party	3
The First Stone/In Person	4
In Short	6
Everyone loses in quota battle	7
Kuwait a year after the invasion	8
For Moldavia, a swing of history's pendulum	9
Energy strategy for nuke plants takes heat	11
Editorial	14
Letters/Sylvia	15
Viewpoints: Vermont tries to cure sick health-care system	16
South African culture boycott—do the right thing	17
In Print: Jim Thompson's big break, too late	18
A scandal for schools	19
In the Arts: Reggae stars slacking off	20
Studs gets nailed	21
Media Beat	21
Classifieds	23
Neo-Nazi vidiots play with fire	24

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By Ken Gluck

MOSCOW

THE MIND, HONOR AND CONSCIENCE OF OUR epoch" was the Soviet Communist Party's immodest self-description for most of the last 70 years. The slogan still stands in neon letters over many of the country's now obsolete and crumbling factories. The party, however, is no longer of one mind. The struggle to present an unblemished face to the world has given way to conflicting tendencies and factions. The summer of 1991 has been the hottest and most unpleasant ever for the Soviet Communist Party.

The latest fissure in the party's wobbling structure was carved out of the party's pro-reform wing. Alexander Rutskoi, Russia's recently elected vice president, announced on August 3 the formation of the Democratic Party of Russian Communists. The new party will attempt to steal the thunder from the Russian Communist Party, led until recently by Ivan Polozkov.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin has tangled with the Russian Communist Party at every step since taking command of the Russian government in May of last year. The Russian Communist Party has become the bulwark of the anti-reform and anti-Yeltsin forces in the republic. "They sabotage all that there is to sabotage," Rutskoi said, explaining the need for the new party.

The Soviet Communist Party survived earlier splits, however. Last year the party's Democratic Platform tried a similar move,

Russia's new Communists form 'progressive' party in Soviet CP

but was able to attract only a small number of party intellectuals. Instead of dividing the party, the Platform's celebrated exodus from party ranks consigned it to political irrelevance.

Rutskoi's new party represents a more serious threat. A decorated Afghan war veteran, Rutskoi has strong ties to the party's generally conservative military faction. And as Yeltsin's running mate in the June elections, he benefits from some of his boss' political magic among the party's progressive wing.

The Democratic Party of Russian Communists is also employing a different strategy than the ill-fated Democratic Platform group. Rutskoi's new party is intent on remaining inside the Soviet Communist Party. These days ambitious Moscow street vendors hawk a new political version of the traditional Russian matriushka doll. The doll's outer shell is painted in Gorbachov's image, while the inner figures bear the likenesses of past party leaders Lenin, Stalin and Andropov.

Rutskoi's new party within a party turns the irreverent doll on its head. He believes a new progressive party can grow inside the edifice of the older conservative model. The new

party hopes to attract progressive-minded party members who are still too attached to the perks and power of party life to consider quitting altogether.

Old party, old path: Conservatives in the Russian Communist Party wasted no time responding to Rutskoi's "new party for Russia's new path." "Participation by party organizations in the newly formed Democratic Party of Russian Communists is forbidden,"

Rutskoi believes a new progressive party can grow inside the edifice of the older conservative model.

the Russian party announced at its August 8 meeting. "It is an objective attempt to split the party." The conservatives voted to expel Rutskoi and several of his associates from the party altogether, although the decision will likely be appealed at a higher level.

Rutskoi's raid on the conservative Russian party comes simultaneously with Yeltsin's attempt to cut the party's legs out from under

it. The Russian president has ordered that party committees at all government enterprises and organizations in the Russian Federation be disbanded (see accompanying story).

Yeltsin's new assault on the party transformed overnight the internal power struggle that has been going on for months within the party. Discussion of the party's new program was supposed to dominate the agenda of the late July meeting of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party and both hard-liners and reformers were geared for a showdown over the document. Different party factions brought conflicting proposals to the conference, but instead of ambushing Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachov with rival programs, as was expected, the conservatives appealed to him for help in blocking Yeltsin's order.

Hard-line conservative groups, who had been calling for Gorbachov's resignation, suddenly realized that their most serious opponents were not their opposing factions in the party. "The order is aimed at finally wiping the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from the political life of the country," charged a group of military party committees.

Continued on page 10

Can Communist officials in Russia maintain workplace influence in wake of Yeltsin's move?

MOSCOW—A week after the Russian Federation formally banned Communist Party cells from workplaces throughout the giant republic, party functionaries at Moscow factories are nervously waiting to see whether Russian President Boris Yeltsin will actually try to enforce the order. Meanwhile, party officials are scrambling to come up with ways to protect their influence at workplaces.

The decree was announced in mid-July, just before the plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. It was set to take effect on August 4, but as *In These Times* went to press, Yeltsin had not moved to enforce the order. The decree stipulates that all party committees—Communist as well as those of the new democratic parties—should be removed from state institutions and workplaces under the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation.

Since few non-Communist parties have yet penetrated workplaces, the decree was widely seen as an effort by Yeltsin to strike a blow against the Communists by outlawing the tangle of Communist Party committees that has allowed the party to effectively dominate workplaces throughout the Soviet Union for 70 years. The Russian Federation composes three-fourths of the territory of the Soviet Union and houses about one-half of the nation's population.

The decree was bitterly denounced at the July Central Committee meeting—so much so that party conservatives forgot their ire at the party chairman, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachov, and turned

all of their rhetorical outrage against the Communist renegade Yeltsin. Gorbachov sharply denounced the decree and promised to fight it, but later, clearly anxious to avoid a confrontation with the popular Yeltsin, he simply urged party leaders "not to give in to panic," no matter "what course developments might take."

The Supreme Soviet, meanwhile, demanded that Yeltsin suspend the decree while it was reviewed by the USSR Committee for Constitutional Control, a dependable pro-Gorbachov body that could be expected to declare the order unconstitutional. Yeltsin rejected that appeal, contending that the decree "does not curtail civil rights and liberties," as Communist leaders have contended, "but does curtail the monopoly of one party, or, to be precise, the partocracy."

Nonetheless, Yeltsin also seemed anxious to avoid a "take no prisoners" approach to the issue. Thus, the order remained unenforced in its first week.

At the party headquarters of the Lenin District of Moscow near the center of the city, the response to the Yeltsin decree is open defiance. Nonetheless, local party secretary Valery Stepankov pointed out that the Communist Party has itself been moving in recent months to carry out some of the same reforms that Yeltsin is now demanding of it. He claimed that the party had decided that its secretaries in some factories should not be paid by management for their political work, as was the custom in the past, and that party committees in some factories should relocate to nearby sites that are off factory

grounds.

Calls to several factories in the Lenin District revealed that they have not yet decided on the question of whether the party committee should move off the premises, as demanded by Yeltsin. The party secretary at the Sverdlov Textile plant, for example, noted that August is the time when workers take summer vacations, and that the issue will probably be decided in September.

But at the Red Rosa silk-producing factory, a venerable red brick institution started more than 100 years ago by a French capitalist and then nationalized after the Revolution and named in honor of German-Jewish revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg, the party committee decided on August 1, several days before Yeltsin's decree took effect, that its longtime paid party secretary, Lyudmila Pavlova, would no longer receive a salary for party work. Instead, Pavlova will be transferred to a new position as head of a production group within the plant.

The Red Rosa party committee has also decided that its airy office, where Pavlova has worked for the last nine years, will soon be closed. After that, the party committee will operate from a room in the factory committee, which is located down the block. This decision must still be confirmed by the larger workers' collective, made up of both Communists and non-Communists.

Pavlova, a dynamic red-haired woman in her late 40s, said that although her party committee believes Yeltsin's decree is deplorable, they nevertheless decided

to comply with it because "this decree is now the law. If we defy it, we risk a fine of 10,000 rubles."

In any event, Pavlova appears genuinely happy with the change, and quite naturally so: in her new position she will receive 800 rubles a month, more than twice the 382 rubles she received as party secretary—a figure, she admits, that was usually supplemented by monthly bonuses.

Pavlova denied that she is receiving such a high salary in her new job because she will, in effect, also be paid for the party work she will continue to do. Pavlova said she will go on with the party work "only out of a sense of duty."

The director at Red Rosa, Vladimir Lachtin, who is also a party member, said he will support whatever decision is reached concerning the location of the party committee by the workers' collective, but he implied that he believes the party committee will remain a force at Red Rosa, whether it is located on the grounds or at the nearby club.

Lachtin's deferential attitude to the party committee, even in its present weakened state, is attributable to the fact that, unlike the situation in the West, a plant director in the Soviet Union is simply a low-paid state functionary who cannot afford to cross the party if he wants to keep his position. Thus, at a plant like Red Rosa, the party secretary is every bit as powerful—if not more so—than the plant director.

—Walter Ruby

By Joel Bleifuss

Quality control?

Who will set U.S. environmental policy in the '90s? The 25 men and women whom George Bush, CEO of Planet Earth, named last month to his Commission on Environmental Quality.

As I pointed out last issue, many members of the Commission on Environmental Quality are the heads of corporations that have been repeatedly convicted of breaking environmental regulations. These people are not themselves criminals, since corporate executives are rarely held liable for crimes committed by the businesses they control. After all, they are just following orders—or, as they might say, company policy.

Last issue in this column, I introduced 10 members of Bush's new environmental commission. Other members include:

11. John A. Georges, chairman and CEO of International Paper Co. On July 23, Bush named Georges to the Commission on Environmental Quality. Twenty days earlier, International Paper paid one of the biggest fines—\$2.2 million—ever imposed by the Environmental Protection Agency. (Larger fines have, in fact, been paid by Dean Buntrock's firm, Waste Management, and William Ruckelshaus' Browning-Ferris Industries. Both men are also members of Bush's commission.) International Paper has plead guilty to five felony charges of improper waste disposal at its plant in Jay, Maine. Among other violations, International Paper was discharging waste into the Androscoggin River through two pipes—one of which it had never told federal regulators about.

One of the worst polluters of rivers and lakes in North America is the paper industry, which uses chlorine to bleach paper. (See *In These Times*, Aug. 7.) Eliminating the use of chlorine in the production of paper is the goal of the Greenpeace Pulp and Paper Campaign.

The campaign's Mark Fogel, who watched Georges in action at the last International Paper stockholders' meeting, had this to say: "John Georges is the last person you would want on a commission designed to seek solutions to environmental problems. All the big paper companies are guilty of this kind of pollution, but International Paper is undoubtedly the worst. They are the ones that are most resistant to changing to clean technology. That is their corporate attitude. That is how they approach all problems: 'Don't tell us what to do. It's our company and we'll run it as we please.'"

12. Paul Edward Gray, chairman, Corporation for Massachusetts Institute of Technology. MIT is a university that has given new meaning to the term "the business of education." Gray has defended MIT's industrial liaison program. This program has been criticized for selling research paid for by U.S. taxpayer dollars to foreign-based multinationals. Whether Gray will be equally willing to sell out the environment remains to be answered.

13. Gilbert M. Grosvenor, heir to and head of National Geographic Society. Here is what two environmentalists had to say about the society.

Lynn Thorpe of Greenpeace: "The National Geographic Society tends to be conservation-oriented but not much else. Of all the groups in Washington, you don't find them advocating progressive environmental solutions."

Brian Lipsett of the Citizens Clearinghouse for Hazardous Waste: "National Geographic glorifies the intrusion of Western culture into the remote corners of the globe."

14. Allen F. Jacobson, chairman and CEO of Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Co. The *New York Times*' Keith Schneider describes Jacobson as "among the first American industrialists to embrace the idea that preventing pollution saves money, and under his guidance 3M had developed one of the world's best programs for eliminating pollution from manufacturing plants."

Others disagree. Lipsett describes 3M as "a company that promotes its waste reduction on the one hand while it steadily increases the amount of toxic waste it releases into the environment."

Will Collette of the Western Organization of Resource Councils says, "They are admired among the national envirocrats—mainstream environmentalists—because of their early efforts at waste reduction. I do appreciate the role 3M played in being among the first major toxics producers to at least say the words 'Toxic waste can be reduced.'"

Yet 3M continues to be a major producer of toxic waste. In 1989 the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency fined 3M \$1.5 million for violating air-particulate standards at the company's Chemolite Center incinerator south of St. Paul in Cottage Grove, Minn. This penalty, the third in three years at this site, is the largest Minnesota has ever imposed.

15. Fred Krupp, Environmental Defense Fund (EDF).

**Mary Beth Rogers: Texas changer**

By Carol Tice

When I meet Mary Beth Rogers, she's on vacation but she's working. That is, she's on vacation from her job as chief of staff to Texas Gov. Ann Richards but she's still working for political change from the grass roots up.

This warm summer evening, she's addressing a National Organization for Women chapter in Durango, Colo., outlining the strategies that rocketed her candidate to victory after a demoralizing and draining primary that left Richards far behind in the polls. The mud-slinging face-off with Republican Clayton Williams made national headlines, and Rogers, who was campaign manager, took advantage of Williams' gaffes, rallying women and swing votes to Richards' camp.

Dressed in a cheery print skirt, turquoise blouse, pearls and rimless glasses, Rogers patiently retraces her steps through the "campaign from hell." Cocking her head to one side, Rogers uses the campaign's grueling, incremental path to victory to illustrate her political philosophy. In her soft, Texas-native drawl, she tells the attentive feminists, "See what you want, use what you have."

Rogers' enthusiasm for politics dates back to the mid-'50s, when as a teenager she collected "Dollars for Democrats." She writes of her political fervor during the turbulent '60s in the prologue to her recently released book, *Cold Anger—A Story of Faith and Power Politics*: "As a young wife and mother, I forfeited fresh vegetables, plucked eyebrows and living potted plants to put up campaign signs, plan precinct meetings or sell the cheap tickets to politi-

cal fundraisers."

It was in this period of her life—married to Texas Democratic political strategist John Rogers and raising two young children—that she first met community organizer Ernesto Cortes Jr., who is the subject of *Cold Anger*. Over breakfast in a Durango hotel Rogers recalls, "I was in San Antonio, and he was just out of college, organizing for the [United] Farm Workers. He organized a bunch of housewives to help boycott, and I was part of that group. I just got to know him and, over the years, we kind of kept up with each other."

In the mid-'70s, Rogers discovered her own political power through her work on the Texas Women's History Project, in which prominent women from Texas' history were identified and interviewed for what became a traveling exhibit. "We changed ourselves," Rogers says. "We discovered the courage and confidence to risk change and the value of shared power. Most importantly, we learned to raise money."

Future governor Richards also worked on the Texas Women's History Project, but it was not the first time she and Rogers met. The two women initially crossed paths in the early '70s, when their husbands were both working with the AFL-CIO on a labor dispute.

Rogers' hard political work earned her respect and clout, first in the local San Antonio Democratic Party machine and later in statewide campaigns. Then, in 1982, Richards was elected state treasurer and appointed Rogers her deputy. The next year *Texas Monthly* heralded John and Mary Beth Rogers

as one of Texas' political power couples.

Despite her success, Rogers was starting to feel burned out. She writes in *Cold Anger*: "I was growing cynical about the transformation of electoral politics and the almost shamlike manufacture of voter consent that gives the appearance of democracy but delivers less and less of its substance."

In addition, John was diagnosed with cancer in 1983. He fought off the disease but died of asthma in 1987. With her beloved dead and her children grown, Rogers was on her own for the first time in decades, needing more than ever to regain her sense of political direction.

Empowerment: During John's battle with cancer, Rogers had once again heard of Ernesto Cortes Jr. No longer with the Farm Workers, Cortes had lit a fire under San Antonio with his own innovative, church-based organizing strategies. That work earned him a MacArthur Foundation "genius" grant in 1984. Cortes' new group, called Communities Organized for Public Service (COPS), had been grooming church leaders to undertake local political actions.

Since her own political career was inspired by her Methodist upbringing, Rogers was intrigued. "I didn't have any idea of the details," she says, "but I knew it was a religious-based kind of organizing and I was watching with some dismay the move of the religious right into politics—Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson. I was beginning to see how destructive and authoritarian it was, and it really bothered me."

Interested in exploring organizations that espoused progressive religious values, Rogers originally planned to interview many people for *Cold Anger*. She began with Cortes and never got to anyone else. The predominantly Mexican-American COPS group in San Antonio was transforming that city's politics, first winning sewers for various neighborhoods, later helping elect the city's first Hispanic mayor, Henry Cisneros. It was the kind of underdog victory that would provide inspiration in the dark days of Richards' gubernatorial campaign.

"[San Antonio] was so repressive, so backward," Rogers recalls. "What was soon to become the majority of the population was so shut out that once the people began to gain some political power, the reversal was dramatic."

Rogers was hooked. To write *Cold Anger*, she left work in Austin and drove one-and-a-half hours to San Antonio to attend evening COPS meetings. Watching Cortes galvanize poor communities to action, Rogers renewed her faith in the political process that she calls "democracy with a small 'd.'"

Cortes organizes with an eye toward sustaining group momentum over time. Avoiding activist burn-out is a perpetual problem in women's groups, and Rogers eagerly noted the COPS techniques. She was also excited by Cortes' emphasis on self-growth through personal action. "I think that people [in other movements] can be empowered, but it's almost a byproduct, an accident," she says. "In his work, it's the centerpiece."

One COPS technique that has made its way into Rogers' work for Richards is a self-evaluation period after major actions, where members analyze their strengths and weaknesses. The point is to build self-confidence and encourage leadership. "We do evaluations in our office," Rogers says. "We did an evaluation of our performance in the recent legislative session."

If you're imagining hours of ugly recriminations, blame assessment and character assassination, forget it. "It's done in a very gentle, supportive kind of atmosphere," Rogers insists. "It's not shaking your finger and saying, 'You failed, and because you failed the whole thing fell apart.' You don't have a scapegoat, because you're all in it together."

Up and at 'em: When the legislature is in session, Rogers is up by 6 a.m., in time to peruse the

New York Times, *Dallas Morning News* and *Austin American Statesman* before arriving at the office at 8 o'clock. "I see my role as a facilitator, a coordinator, a director in terms of directing the flow of activity," she says. "Making sure we keep focused on the important things, as opposed to reacting to everybody else's crisis."

With Rogers in the forefront, the eight-month-old Richards administration is dedicated to changing the good-ol'-boy tradition of Texas government. Rather than cultivate a mystique by being inaccessible, Rogers says, "we bring Republicans over to the governor's mansion. They tell us, 'This is the first time we've been here—the Republican governor never invited us.' We have a very open-door policy. It's a win-win philosophy, as opposed to win-lose."

According to Rogers, Richards put this technique to good use recently when negotiating an insurance-reform package. "Ann literally forged a compromise on 10 very controversial elements that she got business and community activists to agree on. There's a consensus-building decision-making style that brings people together."

Using this inclusive management style also works on critical issues where compromise isn't an option. "On our environmental legislation, Ann called in the CEOs of some of the major chemical companies in Texas—without their lobbyists—and said, 'Now, you can help me pass this, or you can come up against me on this and you'll lose,'" says Rogers. "She was willing to negotiate, but only to a point. And so they came around." Richards got her bill passed.

Yes, ma'am: Rogers has found that the power of the governor's office works wonders. For one thing, sexist behavior disappears. "People have tremendous awe and respect for the office of governor," she says. "I think sometimes the fact that you are female throws people off guard. They don't quite know how to deal with you. But they are groping to find a way. So personally, I don't encounter anything remotely close to sexism. I just do my job."

No sexism in Texas? When pressed, Rogers admits there is still some but says, "If there are any comments, if there are barriers, I find a way to get around them. I'm at the age and stage in life when I don't take things personally."

Toward the end of a legislative session, Rogers is often on the job past 10 p.m. But to Rogers, it's not the long hours that count. She says, "People get mired in the process. They say, 'Oh, I'm putting in 14-hour days.' Well, that doesn't mean anything if you don't accomplish anything—you've got to be real results-oriented."

In Durango, when the feminists complain of feeling like failures, of always being on the losing end of campaigns, Rogers tells them to savor small victories: "If I asked you to deliver X votes from Durango and you delivered them but we lost the race, you still did what you set out to do. If you learned something, you'll do better next time."

I remind Rogers of this remark at breakfast the next day. "Don't get me wrong," she says. "I want to win—very badly. One of the things I've discovered about myself is I am much more competitive than I thought I was."

"But there are different ways to win, and that's what women can figure out. We can bring whatever is natural or organic in our experience, in women's culture, to that process of winning, and win in a slightly different way." Her optimism, however, is tinged with the savvy of a political realist whose life has been spent in an arena that is, after all, still a rigid hierarchy with clear-cut winners and losers.

She gives me a sly smile then cocks her head, as if revealing a secret, and reiterates: "But I want to win."

Carol Tice, a Los Angeles-based writer, is a frequent contributor to *In These Times*.

Although Krupp is one of the few environmentalists on the commission, he and his group get mixed reviews from the environmental community. Grassroots groups that organized against McDonalds' use of ozone-depleting styrofoam are furious at Krupp for taking the credit for McDonald's decision to switch to paper packaging—a myth that has been faithfully repeated in the national press. Lipsett, who worked on the Citizens' Clearinghouse for Hazardous Waste's McToxics campaign, says Krupp "has historically been criticized for leading his environmental group into negotiations and relationships with corporations other environmental groups wouldn't touch with a 10-foot pole."

That assessment is also shared by Collette. "Fred Krupp is leading the move to take environmentalism into the corporate boardroom," he says. "He seems to be more concerned whether or not Wall Street can make money from an environmental improvement rather than whether that environmental improvement can save people's lives or improve the quality of life."

But Lynn Thorpe of Greenpeace Toxics Campaign defends EDF: "We're working together pretty positively on some things. A lot of people will say, 'This is Bush buying out EDF.' But I'd have to see what this commission says and see if EDF's presence on it gives it some integrity."

16. Frank Popoff, president and CEO of the Dow Chemical Co. "My God," was the initial response of one environmentalist when he heard that the head of the chemical giant was on Bush's Commission on Environmental Quality.

Says Barry Commoner of the Center for the Biology of Natural Systems in New York, "Dow has a long and inglorious history of battling the environmental community over a series of very important issues. One of them was Agent Orange, the other is dioxin. Dow Chemical came up with the theory that dioxin was a natural product of fire and that as long as fire was around you would have dioxin. Consequently, Dow maintained that forest fires were the major source of dioxin. This is nonsensical on its face, and it falls flat when you look at the accumulation of dioxin contamination in the Great Lakes, which can be dated by the sediment. More recently, Dow is trying to put a green face on their corporation—but that is hard to do as long as they continue to produce highly toxic chemicals, which is the main part of what they do."

Dow is one of the largest producers of chlorine in North America. And chlorine is a key chemical both in the production of bleached paper and plastic. As mentioned above, Greenpeace has begun a campaign to eliminate chlorine from industrial production. What will be Dow's reaction to this assault on its pocket-book? Says Greenpeace's Thorpe, "We're concerned about how Dow will deal with its declining market share of chlorine."

Dow is a funder of Resources for the Future, a group that specializes in providing industry-friendly assessments of toxic-waste risks. Resources for the Future is also represented on Bush's commission. Dow also helps fund commission member World Wildlife Fund, a group with close ties to industry and the administration.

17. Richard P. Mayer, chairman and CEO of Kraft General Foods North America, a subsidiary of Philip Morris. When asked about Kraft, Thorpe offered this observation: "My suspicion is that you have something doing with packaging going on here. We're going to be seeing moves [from environmentalists] to limit the amount of plastics you can use in packaging foods. This is going to be happening on the state level and the federal level, too. It is very clear that the packaging and food industry doesn't want to be told how to package their goods."

Earlier this year, Kraft and Procter and Gamble Co., another corporation represented on Bush's commission, made news with their support of a proposal to solve the municipal waste problem by composting garbage. Both companies are members of an industry organization called the Solid Waste Composting Council.

But using garbage as agricultural compost has its problems. Household trash contains heavy and toxic metals that if used as compost could then enter the food chain. The Environmental Defense Fund's John Ruston told John Holusha of the *New York Times*, "If you try to compost an undifferentiated waste stream, you will mix batteries with old spaghetti and you will wind up with contamination." And the *New York Times'* Holusha observed, "Critics say composting is being used by program backers as an unrealistic panacea to keep consumers complacent about wasteful packaging practices—and to keep lawmakers at bay." Now it appears Kraft will help make those laws.

Like many other corporations on the commission, Kraft is also a funder of the industry-friendly World Wildlife Fund and Resources for the Future. (See "The First Stone," Aug. 7.)

In a future issue, the list continues with an examination of the remaining eight members of the President's Commission on Environmental Quality.

Making lemonade

A 3-year-old class-action lawsuit has forced the largest lemon-packing operation in the U.S. to pay for its sour hiring and on-the-job practices. In the recent settlement between Saticoy Lemon Association (a member of Sunkist) and some 80 mostly Hispanic women, the women will receive back pay, back seniority and will be placed on a preferential hiring list. The judge in the case found that Saticoy refused to hire women for what it considered traditionally male jobs, instead hiring them only for positions classified as "women's jobs." "Although women were qualified and interested," the judge concluded, "they were passed over for men." While Saticoy continues to maintain its hiring practices were not discriminatory, it has agreed to the \$550,000 settlement "to avoid further legal expenses."

Poor characteristics

The typical image of the poor—as an isolated "underclass" separated from the mainstream by negative attitudes about work, tolerant attitudes toward teen-age pregnancy and welfare use, and high rates of school drop-out and crime—is inaccurate and a hindrance to waging an effective war on poverty, says Urban Institute researcher Patricia Ruggles. The lead witness in a current series of hearings on poverty chaired by Rep. Stephen J. Solarz (D-NY), Ruggles adds that more than 85 percent of the poor in the U.S. are either under 18, over 65, disabled or working. And while the Census Bureau counts 31 million Americans, or 13 percent of the population, as poor, more than 50 million—including 20 million children—would be counted as poor under more realistic measures. The leading cause for the excessively high poverty rates, concludes Ruggles, is stagnant or declining real earnings of low-income workers and a lack of effective federal assistance programs. For more information or copies of Ruggles' testimony, call (202) 857-8702.

Jockeying for abortion

Minneapolis lawyer and racehorse owner Stefan Tolin wasn't horsing around when he adorned his racing silks with a pro-abortion symbol. So when the owner of Minnesota's Canterbury Downs race track forbade him from sporting his politics, he took his cause to court—and won. A Minnesota judge recently granted a temporary restraining order against the track saying that prohibiting such a display amounts to "irreparable harm" because it permits "censorship of free speech for even a minimal period time."

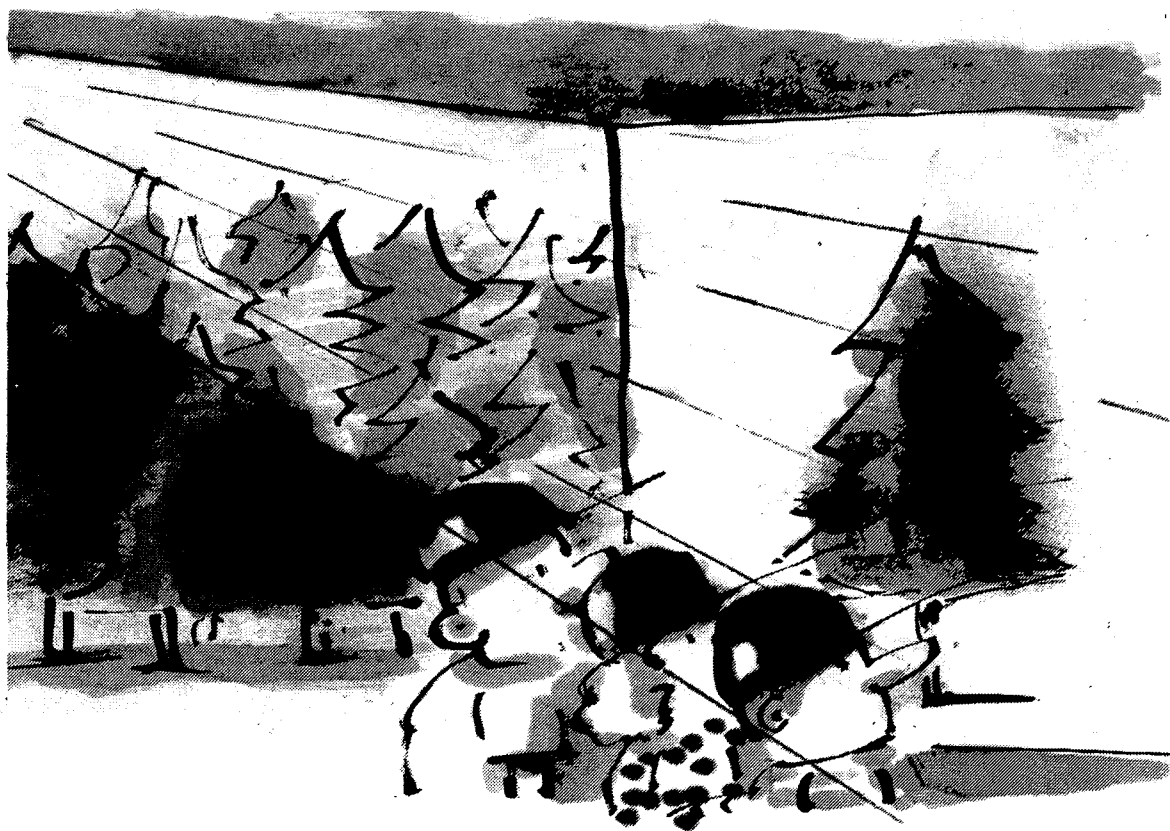
Missing the target

While former U.S. ally and alleged drug kingpin Gen. Manuel Noriega resides in a Miami jail, new research shows that drug trafficking in Panama has returned to pre-U.S. invasion levels. The lesson? There was no just cause for Operation Just Cause, the twentieth instance of U.S. intervention in Panama. President George Bush's "intemperate intervention" of two years ago was irrelevant to solving Panama's or even Washington's pressing drug and diplomatic problems, says the Council on Hemispheric Affairs. Although conditions in Panama continue to deteriorate, the White House plans to slash assistance to Panama from last year's \$420 million to \$27 million. Even now, as unemployment and underemployment in Panama hover around 50 percent, only one third, or \$131 million, of the original aid package—passed five months after the invasion—has actually been dispersed.

Amphibian alarm

It sounds like a science fiction film. Radioactive leopard frogs have descended on Knoxville, Tenn. While the tiny, brownish-green critters can set off a Geiger counter with radiation levels well above normal, U.S. energy officials say they are safe—unless eaten. Workers at a Department of Energy installation outside of Knoxville first reported radioactivity on the tires of their vehicles, apparently from running over the frogs. The line of amphibious contamination originated in the mud of a holding basin for waste water from nuclear research conducted at the lab during the '40s and '50s. Although the basin is fenced in to discourage bird nesting, the laboratory now plans to install fine, mesh "frog fencing" to prevent further leaping leakage.

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Parkbuster video: see the sights before seeing the sights

Zion National Park in southern Utah has been called a red Yosemite for its spectacular sandstone cliffs that loom up to 2,000 feet over the scrubby desert floor. Most Zion fanatics—and there are many who come year after year—drive east from Interstate 15, wending for miles up the Virgin River valley through cottonwoods and junipers and into the tiny hamlet of Springdale where sheep and horses still graze in the pasture downtown. Then they enter the park itself, driving between monolithic sandstone spires colored red, orange and purple like petrified slabs of rainbows. Zion, at only 147,000 acres, may be small compared to other Southwestern national parks, but its famous drive attracts 2.4 million visitors a year who shoot untold miles of Kodachrome and Fujifilm. Now a great debate has broken out on how it will play on a huge IMAX-like movie screen.

An 11-acre meadow lies at the park entrance, bordered on one side by a campground. To visitors it offers a pastoral foreground to the cathedral-like cliffs beyond. But to World Odyssey of Los Altos, Calif., it looks like the perfect site for a theater with a wrap-around screen 60 feet long and 70 feet high showing only one movie, *Treasures*, which will offer a spectacular eagle-eyed tour of Zion. World Odyssey has already erected such theaters near the Alamo in Texas, Niagara Falls and the Grand Canyon, and company officials hope to build others outside Yellowstone and the Great Smokies national parks. But only at Zion will the complex be right at the park entrance. Local zoning laws permit a building only 35 feet tall at this site, but in

June the Springdale city council unanimously voted to grant World Odyssey an exception.

The park surrounds Springdale like a horseshoe, leaving the town a strip of private land roughly a mile wide and five miles long. Fewer than 300 people live there year round, but they have let fly with the rhetoric.

Mayor Robert Ralston makes the term "environmentalist" sound like an epithet, although he also raises three acres of fruit trees and cross-breeds cactus in his hothouse to bloom more beautifully than out in the desert. He says Springdale has been overwhelmed by tourists and needs the tax money from World Odyssey to put in sidewalks and pave its dirt roads. The \$5 million to \$6 million project will triple the town's tax base. "Sixty percent of the people are below the poverty level," he says. "It would only use 12 acres. I would rather see it than 40 little junk shops. Some people have been spreading lies, lies, lies—the talk about a Coney Island atmosphere and giant water slides. Those things never came before the city council." Ralston claims that only about 20 people in town are fighting the project.

Louise Excell, who teaches English at a nearby community college, groans when she hears Ralston's numbers. "Sixty percent of Utah lives in poverty. He says that to impress you, but it takes a lot less to live here than anywhere else," she says, adding that the town could build its own sidewalks if it wasn't spending so much on lawyers to promote World Odyssey. "It's a smokescreen. Springdale does not desperately need development." She admits that most people in town have no great objection to the theater, but insists that more than half would like to see it in another location. "If this goes in, developers are going to queue up and want to pave this valley from one end to the other." She fears Springdale could become a glitter

gulch like so many other tiny towns on national park borders.

"Everybody is still hoping for an angel to come up with a million bucks to buy the meadow for the park," says Marcel Rodriguez, who retired to Springdale to escape the sprawl of Santa Barbara, Calif. The Trust for Public Land and the Grand Canyon Trust have made sympathetic noises, but as yet no one has offered a dime. Now opponents are trying to persuade World Odyssey to build its project somewhere else in town. Even the Zion Park service has been negotiating with the company since April 1988 to jointly build a parking lot for the theater and for a new shuttle-bus system that could alleviate the growing horde of cars. By 1995, park officials expect 3 million visitors—and 4 million by the year 2000. "The shuttle buses would bring people right to [World Odyssey's] door," says Larry Wiese, acting superintendent for Zion. But he says he doesn't want to see the shuttle bus lot right at the park's entrance, turning the serene meadow into Winnebago City.

Nothing now prevents World Odyssey from breaking ground to star construction. But the National Parks and Conservation Association, a private watchdog group, has led a vigorous campaign of letters, lawyers and press releases to save the meadow. "Delays, delays, delays," insists Mayor Ralston. "We've gotten 500 letters, and a lot are for it. But let's say all 500 were against it. Compare that to two and a half million visitors. If you put that on your little pocket calculator you get a total of two-ten-thousandths of 1 percent of the people who were even interested enough to write." But World Odyssey may be more sensitive to the opposition than he is. After all, people like to go to the movies to escape the conflicts of the real world, not sit smack in the middle of them.

—Will Nixon

By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON, D.C.

ALMOST EVERYTHING THAT IS WRONG WITH American politics today can be found in the debate over the civil-rights bill. The Democrats are at their self-destructive worst. Party leaders, prodded by the Washington civil-rights lobby, have fought doggedly for a measure that does, in fact, encourage racial, as well as sexual, quotas. Not only have quotas proven to be a political liability but—by

CIVIL RIGHTS

legislating job preferences based on racial or sexual groupings—they raise disturbing questions about equal opportunity for individuals, as guaranteed by the Constitution.

The Republicans have meanwhile demonstrated their usual willingness to divide and conquer—exploiting racial tensions to win over white voters. The White House, instead of seeking a compromise that could end a racially divisive controversy, has fanned the flames in order to improve the party's election chances. In doing so, President Bush has allowed black America to sink into despair and simmer in resentment.

In June, after the House of Representatives passed the Democrats' bill, Sen. John Danforth (R-MO) attempted a compromise that would have rescued Bush from political irresponsibility while indirectly saving the Democrats from political disaster. Danforth, with the backing of eight other moderate

In playing politics, Bush ignores minorities' plight

Republicans, worked out a new bill that incorporated everything that was valuable in the Democrats' earlier proposal but eliminated the language that would have pressured employers to hire by quotas.

To Danforth's surprise, the White House dismissed his efforts. In a letter dated August 1, Bush accused Danforth not of encouraging quotas but an even more grievous sin. According to the White House, Danforth's compromise—by forcing employers to justify in court their hiring criteria, including educational requirements, for a given job—would undermine the president's emphasis on excellence in education.

Danforth was predictably outraged by this specious and entirely opportunistic argument. The Missouri senator accused the White House of playing politics with race by threatening to kill his civil-rights bill. "There are some who believe that this is a terrific political issue, that somehow the American people will rally to the cause," he said. "I think that it is a serious mistake for the president, for his administration and for the Republican Party to try to turn the clock back on civil rights."

Danforth is now trying to assemble a veto-proof majority to pass the compromise bill next month, and the Democrats, who had earlier complained that Danforth was diluting their efforts, have wisely agreed to support him. Bush could face the embarrassing prospect of vetoing a bill sponsored by a member of his own party.

Missourian's compromise: The Democratic legislation, first introduced by Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA) in February 1990, would strengthen the hand of employees who suffer discrimination in hiring or on the job. For instance, it would prohibit racial harassment on the job—a guarantee not included in the Civil Rights Act of 1964—and would, for the first time, allow all victims of discrimination to sue for money damages. But the provision creating the most controversy concerns "disparate impact" cases, in which employees charge that an employer—whether intentionally or not—is using job criteria that disproportionately screen out minorities or women.

In 1971, the Supreme Court ruled in *Griggs vs. Duke Power* that employers had to show job criteria resulting in a disproportionate exclusion of minorities or women were justified by "business necessity." In *Griggs*, blacks were being excluded from low-level maintenance jobs by a high-school-diploma requirement—a prerequisite that the court deemed unnecessary for the work.

But the high court's opinion was vague enough for some lower courts to rule that in order to bring suit, plaintiffs needed to show only that minorities and women were disproportionately underrepresented among a company's workers. As the Supreme Court argued in the 1989 case *Wards Cove vs. Atonio*, this created pressure on employers to hire by quota.

But in *Wards Cove*, the Rehnquist court went beyond correcting what was unclear in *Griggs*. The court placed the burden of

proof for discrimination on employees rather than on employers—and required plaintiffs to show that specific employer practices did not relate to a business' "legitimate goals." *Wards Cove* virtually slammed the door on disparate-impact cases, making it extremely difficult for employees to bring suit.

In their civil-rights legislation, however, the Democrats not only reversed this provision but also affirmed what was most questionable in *Griggs*. By not requiring that employees specify which hiring criteria were causing discrimination, the Democrats again created pressure on employers to hire by quotas.

In an effort to create a bill acceptable to all sides, Danforth retained all the less-controversial provisions of the Democrats' bill, with minor modifications, and eliminated the threat of quotas by requiring employees to specify what practices were causing discrimination. At the same time, he avoided the pitfalls of *Wards Cove* by putting the burden of proof back on the employers and requiring them to show that their hiring criteria "bore a manifest relationship to the requirements for effective job performance."

Bush veto: When the Democrats charged that, in vetoing their bill, Bush was playing racial politics, he could always respond that he was taking a principled stand against quotas. But Danforth's measure forced Bush's hand. The president had to choose between unifying the country and fomenting racial division to enhance his party's election chances. He chose the latter.

Bush opposed Danforth's compromise, he wrote the senator, because it would require employers to justify their job criteria. According to Bush, this would deter employers from requiring higher levels of education from their employees and would discourage employees from seeking higher education. The bill, Bush wrote, would "seriously, if not fatally, undermine the reform and renewal of our educational system by discouraging employers from relying on educational effort

In Bush's bill, employers who cannot demonstrate that their hiring criteria bear a "manifest relationship" to a specific job can merely show they serve "legitimate goals." Since those "legitimate goals" are undefined, the Bush legislation would give employers free rein to discriminate.

and achievement."

Bush's logic, if accepted by the courts, would make it impossible to prove disparate-impact cases involving educational requirements. If applied to the *Griggs* case, for example, the president's logic would affirm that Duke Power was justified in requiring clean-up crews to have a high-school diploma, even if the plaintiffs demonstrated that a diploma was irrelevant to wielding a broom. Moreover, by rejecting the link between job requirements and the job to be performed, Bush's argument would make it impossible to win any disparate-impact cases—not only those involving required diplomas but also residency or physical requirements.

Bush continues to insist that if Danforth and the Democrats want to pass a bill, they should adopt the one that the president introduced last winter. But Bush's bill would not require employers to show that their job criteria are necessary to an employee's performance of a specific task. In Bush's bill, employers who cannot demonstrate that their hiring criteria bear a "manifest relationship" to a specific job can merely show they serve "legitimate goals." Since those "legitimate goals" are undefined, the Bush legislation would give employers free rein to discriminate. For example, a factory in an all-white suburb could justify a residency requirement on the grounds that such a prerequisite elicited goodwill from the surrounding community—certainly a "legitimate goal" for any local company.

By effectively eliminating disparate-impact cases, Bush's bill would force victims of discrimination to prove psychologically that employers harbored racial or sexual prejudice—something that is nearly impossible to do.

Betraying his class: For Danforth, Bush's action on the civil-rights bill represents an abdication of his responsibility as president. "The most important thing a president can do is keep the country glued together," Danforth said in a press conference after receiving Bush's letter. But for Danforth, a Ralston Purina heir educated at Princeton and Yale, Bush's action also represents a betrayal of their common education and upbringing.

The recent sharp criticisms of Bush's civil-rights stand by Danforth, Sen. Bill Bradley (D-NJ) and Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-WV) do not stem simply from their disagreement with his political stance. Danforth, Bradley and Rockefeller represent an upper-class tradition of public service and noblesse oblige that began with Theodore Roosevelt and continued through Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, Nelson Rockefeller, Averill Harriman and others. Under this tradition, members of the upper class are obliged to provide leadership for the society and to look out for the welfare of the less fortunate.

As Bush relates in his autobiography, *Looking Forward*, he was schooled in this tradition of "duty and service" by his father, Sen. Prescott Bush. But Danforth, Bradley and Rockefeller are charging that, by playing racial politics while ignoring the genuine plight of minorities, Bush has forgotten his lessons.

Indeed, in stirring racial unrest to serve his own narrow ends, Bush is betraying both his upper-class background and the party of Lincoln. His willingness to do so is no less a sign of social breakdown than the rising homicide rates in inner-city ghettos. Indeed, they are different sides of the same problem. □

IN THESE TIMES AUG. 21-SEPT. 3, 1991 7

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By Bill Gasperini

KUWAIT CITY, KUWAIT

PERHAPS THE MOST MOVING EVENT MARKING the anniversary of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait one year ago is an exhibition of crude artwork by Kuwaitis held prisoner in POW camps in Iraq during the occupation of the Gulf emirate. In a darkened room dominated by a wax figure of a prisoner in a jail cell, there are drawings on bedsheets,

THE GULF



One year after invasion, Kuwaitis regroup, rebuild

vast oil reserves and the labor of others.

Thus, for the first time in recent history, the Kuwaiti government is limiting the number of guest workers, who are mostly from Egypt and Asian countries. The stated aim is to insure that Kuwaitis will total a majority of the population. Yet this means they will have to perform jobs that they are most likely unwilling or unable to do.

As bureaucrats carefully screen prospective workers—both skilled and unskilled—who are jamming Kuwaiti consulates from Cairo to Karachi, the labor shortage has hampered the country's reconstruction and business recovery.

At the same time, tens of thousands of Kuwaitis are out of the country for the traditional summer holiday season. Many remain where they waited out the entire crisis, in five-star hotels in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Europe.

As others slowly return, tensions have risen between them and those Kuwaitis who remained inside the country throughout the Iraqi occupation. "I don't think we learned anything from this ordeal, because they [who were outside] haven't changed at all," said Riyadh al-Kazemi, an engineer with the state telephone company. "After all we've been through here, they return from living in luxury and tell us what to do." He said that after managing a skeleton crew during the seven long months of the Iraqi presence and then supervising the relinking of damaged phone lines after the war, his former boss recently returned and promptly demoted him.

Business non-sense: The sluggish pace of recovery also stems from Kuwaitis' shrewd business sense. Their reputation for driving a hard bargain has frustrated scores of foreign business people who have arrived hoping to cash in on reconstruction efforts. This business style has yielded short-term gain but long-term loss. For example, delays occurred during negotiations for the oil-fire cleanup as the government sought the best bids for water-pumping equipment, while an estimated \$120 million went up in smoke each day.

This resurgence of Kuwaiti identity is also

played out on state-run media as tales of the invasion undergo convenient revision. TV programs marking the anniversary didn't mention that Iraq overran the country within hours; instead, Kuwaiti soldiers asserted they had heroically destroyed dozens of Iraqi tanks in the early hours of the invasion. And despite the sacrifices of those Kuwaitis who did conspire against the Iraqis from inside the country, the TV reports conveniently ignored the resistance efforts of non-Kuwaiti residents. Non-Kuwaitis are also excluded from government largesse toward those who remained; the Central Bank paid compensation to Kuwaitis but apparently never considered helping the "guest" workers, most of whom continue working in their jobs to this day without even a vacation break to recover from the occupation.

On the August 2 anniversary, some Kuwaitis celebrated the same way they did after liberation on February 26, careening through the streets honking car horns and even shooting in the air. This outraged those who thought the anniversary should be observed solely as a day of mourning.

Journalist Hussein Abdulrahman, who remained in Kuwait during the occupation, was

Most Kuwaitis appear more concerned with making money again than with having a say in running the emirate.

incensed at some of his compatriots who waved flags and honked in a car caravan. As they stopped in a parking lot, he argued with them as well as with a policeman driving a sleek new patrol car who claimed to be powerless to stop the revelers.

"How can they do this? People are still missing, and they carry on as if it's all a wild party," he said afterward. "And these policemen are worthless; no one pays them any heed." He also grimaced each time he spot-

ted a new car with foreign plates, brought back by Kuwaitis who spent the crisis abroad.

One forum in which these frustrations can be vented is the National Council, a semi-elected group with no power to legislate that was created by Emir Sheikh Jaber al-Ahmad al-Sabah in 1990 in response to political pressure. (The council was a stopgap measure by the reclusive Kuwaiti leader who had earlier dissolved the National Assembly when it began investigating alleged corruption.)

Meeting at least once a week, the 75-member council—one-third of whom were appointed by the emir—has debated everything from population policy and citizenship rights to a plan to give all Kuwaiti families the equivalent of \$70,000, a reflection of the long welfare tradition by which the ruling al-Sabah family has retained its support.

Business as usual: Elections for a new legislature are scheduled for October 1992, appeasing opposition demands for greater democracy. Most Kuwaitis seem to agree with the ruling family's assessment that more time is needed to consolidate reconstruction before the voting, and the election promise has helped dampen demands for reform. In another shrewd move, the emir may also extend the vote to women, something that is likely to rally support for pro-emir candidates and take even more wind out of the opposition's sails.

The ruler's strategy appears to be working. Except for a small group of outspoken political leaders, most Kuwaitis appear more concerned with re-establishing their businesses and making money again than with how much say they have in running the emirate. So citizens follow tradition by gathering nightly for discussions in *diwanis*, free-form debates held in private homes to touch on both political and business matters. One group seized the opportunity of the August 2 anniversary to push publicly for an end to media censorship and quicker reforms.

Such calls for democratic reforms would be impossible in Kuwait's immediate neighbors, particularly Saudi Arabia, where the royal al-Saud family looks uneasily at any major changes in Kuwait. "Kuwait remains unique among the Gulf states in allowing such free-form discussion," said a Western diplomat. "People here can continue to say pretty much whatever they want."

During discussions over the emirate's future, Kuwaitis demonstrate that they have not lost their sense of humor. In spite of all that has happened, a political satire called *Desert Storm* is playing nightly to packed audiences. The audiences laugh hysterically as an older couple learn of the invasion by telephone from their son in California, who's watching the ubiquitous CNN. Later, Iraqi soldiers come to taunt the family in search of weapons, and a Saddam Hussein character makes an appearance in the second act.

To a visitor, it seems curious that during this early stage, with memories of the occupation so fresh, Kuwaitis could revel in their own misery. But like their attitude toward non-Kuwaitis, toward calls from outsiders for more "democracy," toward people who are let down when they discover there are no pots of gold in the oil-rich emirate, Kuwaitis are reordering the country in their own way, on their own terms.

William Gasperini is a Cairo-based journalist.

Moslem rosaries fashioned from date pits, vests and other clothing made from bits of blankets.

Yet as Kuwaiti visitors quietly gaze at the objects and denounce Iraq for still holding some 2,500 prisoners, they are also oblivious to the fate of some 1,200 refugees who are virtual prisoners in a makeshift refugee camp in Kuwait near the Iraqi border. Among them is a once-respected artist who is making remarkably similar drawings to those on display, except he is using bits of cardboard taken from American military field-ration kits.

Most of the refugees are stateless Bedouin people, who were born in Kuwait or Iraq of nomadic parents but are denied citizenship under the emirate's restrictive nationalist laws. Despite ample evidence that the artist assisted the Kuwaiti resistance by illustrating and distributing clandestine leaflets before his arrest and imprisonment by the Iraqis, refugee artist Sabah Ibrahim al-Khalaf and other non-Kuwaitis are now shunned by Kuwaitis, unable to return home after being freed from Iraqi prisons.

The largest and most visible group among these refugees is the Palestinians. Although many of them participated in Kuwait's fight against Iraq, some did collaborate with Iraq. This, along with Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yassir Arafat's pro-Iraq tilt during the war, is used by the Kuwait government to justify its current anti-Palestinian stance. Although no official expulsion policy exists, Palestinians, who are systematically denied access to Kuwait's jobs and schooling, have little choice but to leave the country.

One year after: One group can't come back in, another is on the way out; the plight of both Bedouins and Palestinians reflects the current state of affairs in the oil-rich emirate. One year after the Iraqis rolled in and five months after they were forced back out, Kuwait is best characterized as a country that is both intensely nationalistic and xenophobic. All too dramatically, the invasion revealed to Kuwaitis just how dependent they were on outside powers for defense, on educated foreigners (such as Palestinians) for administration and commerce, and on less-educated "guest" workers for manual labor.

Signs of recovery are visible everywhere. Businesses are slowly reopening; pollution levels have dropped as firefighters continue to bring hundreds of burning, Iraqi-sabotaged oil wells under control; cleanup teams have removed most of the burned-out vehicles from streets and highways; and traffic jams are again common, even though an estimated 300,000 Kuwaitis remain outside the country.

But coping with the physical aftermath is only part of the story. More importantly, ethnic Kuwaitis are trying to restructure their society even as they seek a return to the pre-crisis status quo of living off their

By Paul Hockenos

KISHINEV, USSR

IN THE CAPITAL CITY OF THE FORMER SOVIET Socialist Republic of Moldavia, the old flag of the kingdom of Romania billows in the breeze atop the one-time Central Committee building. For some Moldavians in the renamed Republic of Moldova, the changes may seem like a somewhat belated swing of history's pendulum. Since 1812, the territory of Bessarabia has passed back and forth between Russian and Romanian hands seven times.

NATIONALISM

The last year the tricolor Romanian flag flew between the Prut and Dniester rivers was 1944. Then when the Red Army recaptured the region that had been annexed in 1940 under the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, it put Bessarabia back under Soviet control for good.

Or so it seemed at the time. Only a short step behind the Baltic States, the diminutive republic of 4.3 million people has joined the headlong race toward independence from the Soviet Union. Squeezed between Romania and the Ukraine, two-thirds of Moldavia's population is Romanian and the elected nationalist leadership has set its sights on reunification with Romania. The nationalists' heavy-handed moves, however, have sparked ethnic conflict and incipient territorial fragmentation in the republic.

Along Kishinev's broad tree-lined main boulevard, the spring flax swirls like a blizzard in the air. Outside parliament, pedestrians clutching sugary soft drinks weave their way through the loose police cordons. Inside the Stalinist structure, the right-wing Moldavian Popular Front (MPF) wields the republic's new power. In elections early last year, the MPF won 40 percent of the seats. Another third of the representatives stand solidly behind their nationalist agenda.

From Russian to Romanian: With the communist regime aside, the nationalist government immediately embarked on a radical independence course. Romanian replaced Russian as the only official language, transforming "Moldavia" into "Moldova" and "Kishinev" into "Cishinau." The republic's declaration of sovereignty insisted on a confederal restructuring of the Soviet Union as "an association of sovereign states." The far-reaching plan proposed that the 15 republics have exclusive jurisdiction over their own economic policy, territorial defense, international representation and law enforcement.

Only a few blocks from the gaping, impersonal spaces of the city center, the former Jewish quarter offers a taste of the Kishinev that was. Before World War II, 40 percent of Kishinev was Jewish. Today, only a handful of Jews live in the squat old houses under the willow trees.

There is already an early morning flow of traffic at the MPF headquarters. Accompanied by his sister, a worried-looking 18-year-old soldier AWOL from the Soviet Army seeks the Front's protection. His officers beat him, he says, for not speaking proper Russian. Also there, four members of the Bucharest-based group Pro-Bessarabia wait to meet with the MPF's radical young leader, Yuri Rosca.

When the anti-communist nationalist movement began here in 1988, the charismatic Rosca, then a 27-year-old journalist, was at its center. "The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was a diabolical means to export empire on

Moldavia turns back on USSR, sets sights on neighboring Romania

the Romanian people," says the small, bearded man, his eyes flashing. "Only full national liberation can put an end to our occupation." He says that independence must come first, and that unification with Romania will follow in less than 10 years.

Rosca also makes the oft-heard charge that Moldavia suffered economic exploitation at Moscow's hands, and that on its own or with Romania a free-market-based economy would flourish. Yet independent economists point out that prosperous little Moldavia served for years as the Soviets' Balkan showcase. Investment in light industry and access to cheap Eastern raw materials put the republic on a privileged economic par with Georgia and the Baltics.

Although the price hikes have tripled most costs, the outdoor markets are brimming with produce, meat and cheese. "The problem is that most people can't buy the goods here," says one woman in the market, where producers set their own prices. She and her husband, a schoolteacher, live on a salary of 240 rubles (\$9) a month. "I can afford only things in the state shops, but there's nothing there anymore."

Not only Moscow has protested Moldavia's path. Polls show that even many Romanian Moldavians are reluctant to join their estranged and impoverished brethren across the border.

But for the Russian, Russified Ukrainian

and Gagauz minorities, the prospect of joining Romania is nothing less than terrifying (see accompanying story). The older generations remember well the brutal four-year reign of Axis-allied Romania in Moldavia during World War II. And the chauvinistic official policies toward the republic's "occupants" (MPF terminology for Russians) has simply fueled those fears.

Since the nationalists' rise to power, the government has rapidly turned the privileges of the Russians into those of Romanians. All citizens must learn Romanian within four

With the communist regime aside, Moldavia's nationalist government embarked on a radical independence course.

years or lose their jobs. The new leadership has taken control of the Communist Party's media apparatus, transforming the television and radio into instruments of its own propaganda. In the schools, national literature and the "history of the Romanians" were added to the curriculum as core subjects.

The nationalist revival has sacrificed all

but the trappings of democracy, contends Ukrainian parliament member Vladimir Solonar. "It is impossible to conduct a civilized debate in parliament," he says. "The majority simply approves its own measures without discussion." Until recently, nationalist thugs routinely intimidated and beat minority representatives on their way to parliament.

The mob violence that left at least seven people dead last year has subsided with the removal from office of ultranationalist Prime Minister Mircea Druc. Yet Druc retains a potent power base within the MPF. Today, his lumpen gangs, replaced by a new national police force, gather daily in the city park under the statue of St. Stephen.

In the labyrinth: The republic's belligerent nationalist policies have sent a significant strata of the minorities looking to Moscow for help. The majority of the Russian population, tied to the complex web of social and ethnic privilege, has become the principle defender of the status quo.

"Many of us feel like we're in a labyrinth," says historian Alexie Heistwer, a Moldavian-born Russian and member of the democratic non-parliamentary group Memorial. "On the one side there is a nationalist tyranny and on the other a military dictatorship. We have no democratic options here—only Kishinev or Moscow."

It is in Bucharest, however, that Moldavian nationalists see the key to their future. The question of reunification, strictly taboo during the communist era, rages as fiercely today in Romania as it does in Moldavia. Romanians now travel visa-free across the formerly impenetrable border. Unification proponents have initiated a host of cultural programs and exchanges to reforge the faded "spiritual union" between the peoples. When push comes to shove with Moscow, the Moldavians argue, it will be Bucharest's job to take over the reins.

But much to Kishinev's chagrin, Romania's elected leaders have declined their trust. Since Romania's recent Cooperation and Mutual Assistance Treaty with the Soviet Union, Bucharest has clearly distanced itself from the Bessarabia issue. Thus, for the meantime, the MPF has placed its bets instead on alliance with Romania's opposition parties.

The prospect of a "Greater Romania" also raises the prickly question of borders. In 1940, the Soviet Union dismantled historic Bessarabia, sending northern Bukovina and southern Bessarabia to the Ukraine. Romanians on both sides of the Prut insist that the amputated regions must also return to Romania.

The Ukraine naturally contests the charge, creating a scenario for certain conflict should the republics eventually break from Moscow. United against the "center," the republics striving for independence have soft-pedaled differences over borders. But even in the Baltics, republican borders were never drawn to house independent nation-states.

Romanians may be split over the unification of their nation. But within the context of ethnic infighting, disputed borders and military intimidation, the logic of nationalism has a potent pull. Should things get nasty in Moldavia, like it or not, Romania may find a long-lost relative at its doorstep. □

Chips off old block: 2 regions break from Moldavia

TIRASPOL, USSR—A giant Lenin bust glares defiantly over this city, capital of the self-proclaimed Soviet Socialist Republic of Transnistria. Here, on the left bank of Moldavia's Dniester River, Moscow's word still carries more weight than Kishinev's.

Late last year, both Transnistria and the southern Gagauzia region unilaterally broke from the Republic of Moldavia. Its shift to Romanian and Latin script was the last straw for the minority-populated regions. Now the "new republics" simply ignore Moldavian legislation. And without an army, Kishinev is powerless to react.

That even Moscow refuses to recognize their independence doesn't faze the nascent republics. "Borders have been redrawn many times in the Soviet Union," says Litskai Valeri, aide to Transnistria's president. He is confident that the new union treaty will find a place for Transnistria in the Supreme Soviet.

Transnistria never was and never will be part of Romania, say its leaders. The tiny swath of land east of the Dniester was added to Moldavia after World War II. Today, two-thirds of its inhabitants are Russian and Ukrainian, the rest Moldavian Romanians. "More than 60 million Soviet citizens live outside the borders of their national republics," explains Valeri, a Russian. "Our security depends upon the Soviet Union remaining whole."

Seventy miles southwest, the Transnistrians have an ally in Gagauzia. The Gagauz, a Turkic-speaking Orthodox Christian people of 150,000 in Moldavia, have also founded their own republic.

The Gagauz in Romania, Greece and Bulgaria have been so thoroughly assimilated that they've lost their ethnic identity," says Stephan Kuroglu, a deputy in the Kishinev parliament and director of the Gagauz-studies department at the Moldavian Academy of Sciences. He fears that his people would suffer the same fate were Moldavia to go its own way. Russian, for example, is already the Gagauz' second language, he points out.

The Gagauz are split over the autonomy issue. One camp argues that cultural autonomy within a union bound democratic Moldavia would enable the Gagauz to resuscitate their faded identity. Others claim that the time is finally ripe for Gagauzia to stake out its own republic.

The Gagauz announced their succession after the Moldavian legislature scrapped earlier plans to grant the region cultural autonomy. Tension climaxed last fall when a scheduled referendum of the region's independence prompted Kishinev to mobilize hundreds of angry supporters against the Gagauz. The armed nationalist hooligans marched on the city of Komrat, leaving six Gagauz dead.

Moldavians charge that both the Gagauz and the Transnistrians are playing Moscow's game. Indeed, Moscow supports both movements as insurance against Moldavia's effort to secede from the Union. "Perhaps some of our aims coincide," responds Kuroglu to the charges of collaboration. "But the Gagauz struggle for self-determination existed centuries before Lenin was born." —P.H.

Soviet Union

Continued from page 3

Gorbachov used the unaccustomed calm within the party to push through his proposal for the Communist Party's new platform. The rival proposals were brushed aside without discussion. The party's conservatives found little to celebrate in the new program, which will be voted on at a party congress in the fall. "Gorbachov Defeats Marxism-Leninism, the Death Certificate of the Doctrine is Ready," proclaimed the headlines in Moscow's *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (Independent Gazette). The vanguard party will preach revolution no more.

"The party will work exclusively through legal political methods in the framework of a parliamentary democracy," reads the proposed program. The old support for "scientific atheism" was also dropped. Even the

church's faithful will now be welcome in the party. In defending the new program, Gorbachov did not bother to hide the breadth of the change in the party's position. "To put it simply," he told the committee, "the previous theoretical and practical model of socialism, which the party was tied to over the course of many decades, has turned out to be inviable."

Gorbachov's kinder, gentler program set the capital's hyperactive rumor mills spinning. Will the Communist Party return to its pre-revolution name, the Russian Social Democratic Workers Party? Yeltsin's threat to the party's foundation postponed the fight over the party's direction, but sooner or later the party's conservatives will have their say. And when they launch their attack—a move expected at the fall party congress—will Gorbachov finally say goodbye to party life?

Gorby's insurance policy: If Gorbachov

does flee the party there is little doubt where he will be heading. In early June several of the country's most prominent reformers unveiled the Movement for Democratic Reform. Those in the Soviet Union who ascribe limitless foresight and control saw the new movement as Gorbachov's personal parachute in the event he decides to ditch the party (or is himself ditched by party hard-liners).

The new movement includes some of the most prominent figures from Gorbachov's six-year reign, such as former Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze and former adviser Alexander Yakovlev. The movement's leaders are on both sides of the party membership debate. Yakovlev, Russian Vice President Rutskoi and Arkady Volsky are still holding onto their party cards while Shevardnadze, Leningrad Mayor Anatoly Sobchak and Moscow Mayor Gavriil Popov have already bid the party farewell.

Even without further turmoil in the leadership, the party appears to be a sinking ship. It has lost more than 4 million members in recent years, Gorbachov told the Central Committee members. Millions more have ceased paying their party dues. The defections are sure to continue through the fall as the party attempts to redefine its place on the world's new political map. Each step will inevitably infuriate one side of the party's polarized membership.

But the ideological battles within the party and the defections they trigger are themselves becoming irrelevant. Power binds members to the party more than ideology. "The ideologues from the right and the left might leave, but local party secretaries are going to hang on no matter what path the party takes," explained Andrei Fadin, an editor of *Commersant* (Merchant), an independent weekly.

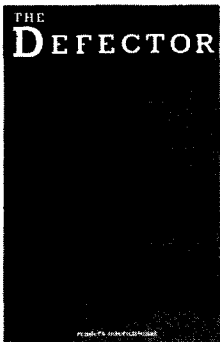
Yeltsin's order to disband local party committees cuts deeper than any other recent ideological debate. If it is implemented effectively, it will gradually shrink the party's influence from the bottom up. This, rather than the fate of dialectical materialism, is the biggest fear of the remaining Communists. The party of Lenin is becoming the party of the threatened local bureaucrat, bereft of ideas, bereft of conscience. The end of ideology has reached the party line.

Ken Gluck is an *In These Times* correspondent in Moscow.

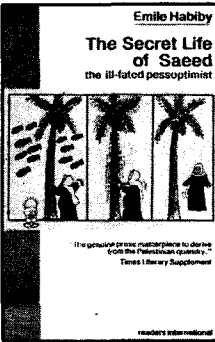
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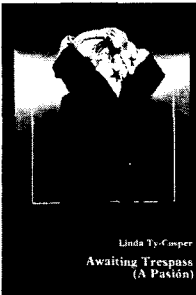
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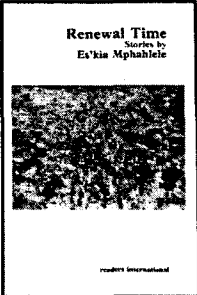
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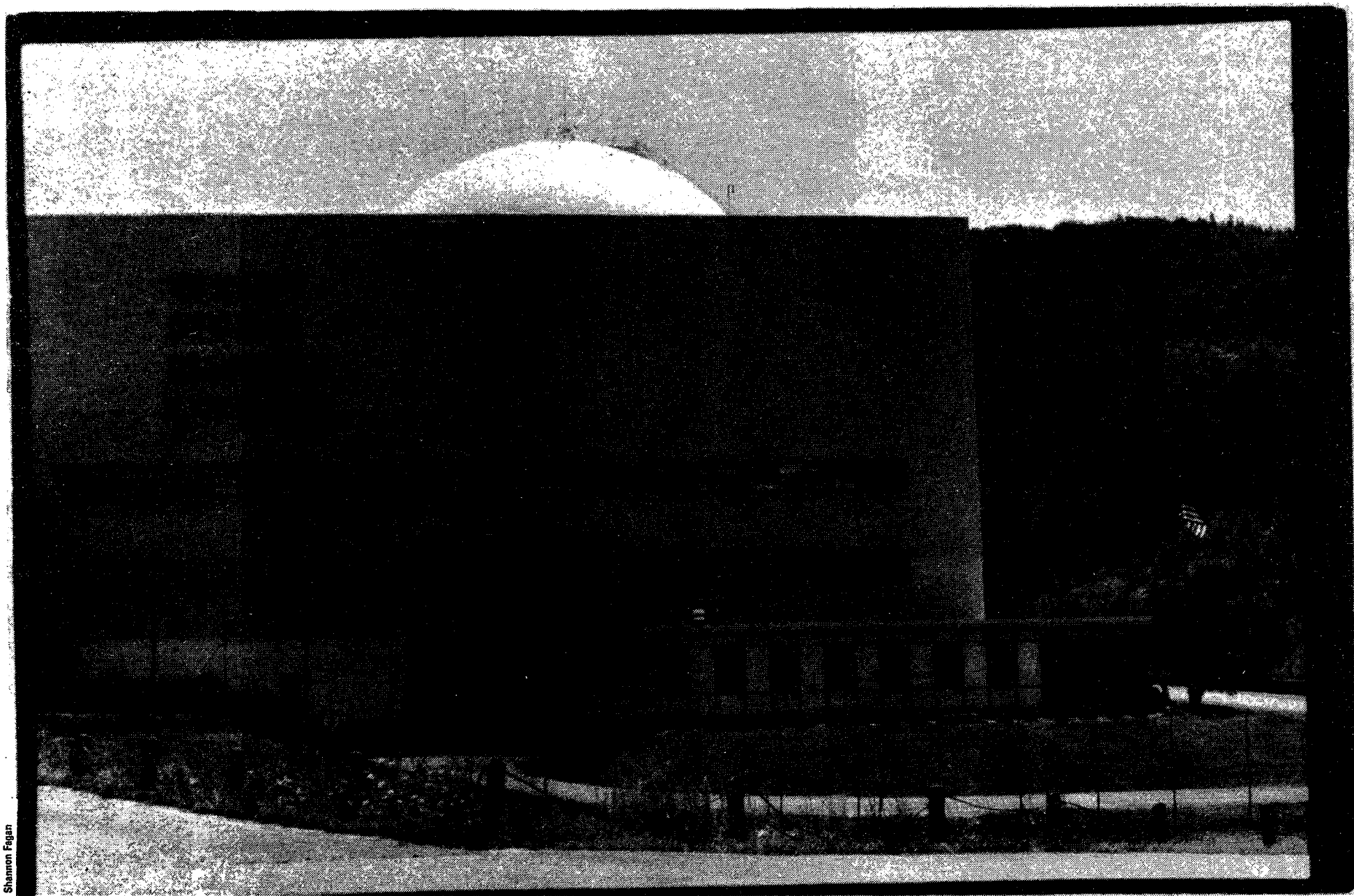
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Old nukes aren't good nukes

A case study in regulating aging power plants.



By Shannon Fagan

ROWE, MASS.

ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS ACROSS THE GREEN spectrum cried foul last February when the Bush administration unveiled its long-awaited National Energy Strategy. The most criticized provision—opening Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling—has been an easy target just two years after the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill. But as the legislative version of Bush's plan makes its way to the Senate floor, another section of the policy paper is attracting attention—the plan calling for the construction of enough new nuclear-power plants to triple current U.S. nuclear-power production and propel the nuclear industry well into the 21st century.

Dubbed the "National Energy Tragedy" by anti-nuclear groups, the plan's nuclear-power portion aims to extend the life of existing nuclear plants, streamline the licensing process for new reactors, standardize new reactor design and establish a short-term disposal site for radioactive waste. It calls for up to 290

gigawatts of nuclear power, as opposed to the 85 gigawatts currently produced by 111 nuclear plants around the country. Altogether, it is the most forthright promotion of nuclear-power technology to come from the federal government.

"This isn't just an energy plan; it's like a world view about the roles of corporations and the rights of citizens and oversight agencies," says Greenpeace energy expert Alex Allen. "And it represents the most comprehensive package of pro-nuclear provisions to reach Congress."

If the National Energy Strategy has struck some as a nuclear-industry wish list, no one would deny that the industry could use a fairy godmother right about now. After years of subsidies and protection, including a federal act limiting insurance liability, the industry is moribund.

Every day is Earth Day. In an attempt to reverse the decline, industry ads for Earth Day last year proclaimed "Every Day is Earth Day with Nuclear Power." The U.S. Council for Energy Awareness (USCEA), a nuclear-industry public relations group, conducted market

research to find a publicly acceptable tag for the new reactors the industry hopes to introduce. "Inherently safe" was the winner. And the USCEA has been arguing in every available forum that nuclear power is the answer to the country's dependence of foreign oil and the solution to global warming, despite the fact that transportation, not electricity, accounts for the lion's share of the country's oil use.

But public relations has its limits, and the National Energy Strategy argues that unless dramatic action is taken, nuclear power in the U.S. may face extinction. It reads: "Since the early '70s, plans for more than 100 nuclear power units in this country have been either canceled or deferred indefinitely. Only three nuclear power plants remain in the construction pipeline—all scheduled for completion within the new few years. No new commercial U.S. power reactor has been ordered since 1978. Unless license renewal is permitted, existing nuclear plants must shut down when their licenses expire."

The specter of a revitalized nuclear-power industry has set off alarms among the groups

Continued on next page

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that traditionally oppose nuclear power. These groups have, however, received surprise support from environmental groups that usually shy away from the nuclear-power debate. This spring 14 organizations—among them several so-called “Big 10” environmental groups, including the National Audubon Society and the Sierra Club—signed a letter to Congress that rejected the National Energy Strategy goal of one-step licensing for new nuclear plants.

Yankee shut down—In June, the theoretical debate over the future of nuclear power suddenly took shape when the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) and the New England Coalition on Nuclear Pollution petitioned the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to shut down the oldest commercial power reactor in the country, the Yankee Atomic plant in Rowe, Mass. UCS engineer Robert Pollard claimed the nuclear reactor was “operating in violation of NRC requirements and presents a substantial threat to public safety. The reactor pressure vessel—one of the plant’s critical safety components—has become so weakened by radiation that it could rupture and lead to a reactor meltdown.”

The timing of the petition was devastating. Yankee Rowe was just three months from becoming the first plant to apply for a 20-year license renewal. Though the plant’s 40-year operating permit is not due to expire until the year 2000, according to the *Boston Globe*, the industry had selected the 31-year-old facility in 1988 as the lead plant for license renewal and was spending \$2.8 million on research to accompany the application. The Department of Energy was co-sponsoring the renewal and was expected to chip in \$1.5 million.

As the word spread that the oldest reactor in the country was on the ropes, NRC Director of Nuclear Reactor Regulation Thomas E. Murley defended the agency’s decision to keep it running. The information on reactor embrittlement had been reviewed by NRC staff the previous year, when Murley authorized the plant to continue operating until a scheduled refueling shutdown in spring of 1992. Basing the move on an NRC provision that allowed him to grant an exemption from certain safety criteria if reactor safety were demonstrated in other ways, Murley ordered tests of the reactor vessel during the next shutdown. Rowe was under scrutiny, the NRC contended, but everything was under control.

Murley’s response only angered the petitioners. “The industry chose quiet, safe little Rowe to be its lead candidate for relicensing, and it now appears that there is a serious problem with reactor safety, which the NRC is doing its best to deny,” says Diana Sidebotham, vice president of the Vermont-based New England Coalition on Nuclear Pollution. “It’s that attitude that disturbs people more than anything else about nuclear power—the careless, arrogant mindset.”

What started off as an industry campaign to make Rowe the first renewal applicant was turning instead into a loud and messy debate over the regulatory backbone of the NRC, the integrity of the industry and the future of nuclear power in the U.S. After two months of official meetings, public hearings, and statistical analyses, the plant is still running. The standoff that has resulted is an apt symbol for the showdown shaping up between the federal government and an anti-nuclear coalition that may be wider than it has ever been.

The heart of the dispute stems from the NRC’s own documents, which, according to UCS scientist Pollard, show that 31 years of radiation have given Rowe’s reactor vessel a higher reference temperature than is allowed

by NRC criteria. The higher the reference temperature, the more brittle the vessel, making it vulnerable to rupture. Pollard also claims the vessel falls short of NRC fracture-toughness standards, a measure of the strength of the vessel’s steel and weld materials, and that Yankee Rowe has failed to comply with requirements for vessel testing and inspection throughout its lifetime.

The main safety threat from all of this, the NRC concedes, is an event known as pressurized thermal shock, which could lead to a meltdown. Under a specific set of circumstances, a pipe break could lead to a loss of the reactor coolant water. The plant’s emergency cooling would funnel thousands of gallons of cool water into the hot reactor, and the shock of the temperature change could cause the reactor vessel to crack, leading to a meltdown.

Remember the Alamo—The Yankee Rowe plant sits by the Deerfield River in the rolling Berkshire countryside, where even the brutal Massachusetts recession seems like a fading

dream. Motel owners in these parts make most of their yearly income during the New England fall, when sightseers line the two-lane roads. On this July day, however, the roads are lush with greenery. At the end of one of them lies the Yankee Atomic Visitors Center, a neat white frame house where tourists can watch videos (including a Disney film on nuclear power) or test out a Geiger counter on a watch with a radium dial and an orange Fiestaware plate. Apparently, the lesson is that since everyday objects contain radioactivity, it must be safe.

“We knew we were going to have to take the heat by applying for the license-renewal designation,” says Bill McGee, Yankee Rowe’s public-relations man. “And when we did—sure enough—I kind of feel like Sam Houston at the Alamo right now, when Santa Ana is out there with all his friends.”

McGee was having a busy week. By then Yankee Rowe had been on Cable News Network, in the *New York Times* and on Armed Forces Radio. Public hearings were to begin

at Rowe Elementary School that night, and the Associated Press had just showed up for a tour of the plant. McGee was making the case he had been making for several weeks. “The reason we were selected to be the lead plant for license renewal in the first place is because Yankee has this unbelievable track record. We have the best efficiency rating probably in the whole world. This plant runs 74 percent of the time for the last 31 years.”

“There is no question they have been one of the better plants,” says Michael Mariotte, director of the Washington, D.C.-based Nuclear Information and Resource Service. “In those measurements, it has had a good capacity and a good record. That does not mean, however, that the plant is safe.”

Former NRC senior materials engineer Pryor Randall, in fact, says it isn’t safe. “In layman’s terms, people like me are saying that old vessels are brittle as hell,” he says. During his tenure with the NRC Randall helped write the commission’s rules regarding vessel strength in the early ’80s. As one of the NRC



Yankee Rowe, the nation’s oldest commercial nuclear power plant, could be the first to get a new lease on life.

staff who reviewed the Yankee Rowe data, he says he wasn't comfortable with the decision to keep the plant running and wrote letters to his bosses saying so. Randall retired last fall at the age of 70, but he is still troubled that his concerns were overruled. "I'm a good company man," says Randall. "I came from the NRC; I wasn't an anti-nuke. I didn't write to the *New York Times* with my concerns—I wrote to Murley."

An unusual event: An example of the fine line between safety and disaster in nuclear operations came during a tour of the plant. Outside the pump room, McGee pointed out an electric pole surge arrestor that had been shattered during a severe lightning storm weeks earlier. In the reactor-control room, assistant plant supervisor Tim Henderson described the scene at the time. "It was pretty exciting. The lightning hit the arrestor and plowed right through. It knocked out the incoming power and got into the plant a little ways and took out some of our instrumentation. So what you saw here was momentary

blackness, and then emergency systems came on," said Henderson. We looked around the avocado-green room, where three walls of instrument panels are scanned continuously by five reactor operators. "After that," said Henderson, "there was about 10 minutes of sharp discussion between the operators on where they stood and what they could trust."

The lightning incident is classified as an "unusual event," an incident category that happens hundreds of times a year in the nuclear industry. The NRC later cited the plant for safety-procedure violations that included not properly activating emergency response facilities and delays in notifying state officials in Vermont and Massachusetts.

But the real issue that week in Rowe was summed up by one question: "How safe is the reactor?" Some 700 area residents filled the Rowe Elementary School auditorium and overflowed onto the ballfield outside to tell NRC and Yankee Atomic that they believed it was not safe enough. "I say no more. We have done our share, and the nuclear industry has

not lived up to their promises," said Sandra Street, a homemaker from Bernardston, 22 miles from the plant. "How long will citizens put up with the scientific tall tales of nuclear-power safety? A technology used by a monopoly, subsidized with our tax dollars, while safe technology receives less and less."

Another speaker noted that chances of a catastrophic accident at Yankee Rowe were greater than a person's chances of winning the state lottery. While his math was basic, it was on track. The odds of a pressurized thermal shock accident, according to the NRC, are between 1 in 10,000 and 1 in 100,000. Add to this the other set of calculations—that if such an accident occurs, odds are between 1 in 10 and 1 in 100 that the reactor vessel will be damaged, paving the way for a meltdown. The odds of winning the Massachusetts Millions is one in 14 million.

The state's two U.S. senators, Edward Kennedy and John Kerry, both sent representatives who called for a plant shutdown. Freshman Massachusetts Rep. John Olver, whose district includes Rowe, came personally to express his concerns about public safety. But the best question of the evening was asked by U.S. Rep. Bernie Sanders from Vermont, the former socialist mayor of Burlington. An aide read a letter Sanders had sent to the NRC in which he called for a shutdown and noted that citizen safety wasn't the only issue at stake. "The determination of the Bush administration to proceed full-speed ahead with nuclear power is being tested," wrote Sanders, "and it remains to be seen to what extent that factor enters into the NRC's judgment."

A tougher leader? On July 1, in the midst of the debate over Rowe, a new chairman assumed the reins at the NRC. Ivan Selin, fresh from two years as undersecretary of state for management, had also founded his own computer-services and consulting firm and worked as a research engineer at the Rand Corporation. Though he doesn't have a nuclear background, he has held his own in the commission meetings rehashing the Yankee Rowe data. He transferred the final decision on the plant from NRC staff to the four-member panel of commissioners and temporarily excited anti-nuclear activists when he posed their question to his staff at an open meeting in July. "If it's not safe to run after April [1992], why is it safe until April?" Selin challenged.

But on July 31, Selin and the commissioners voted to keep the plant running until the April shutdown, provided that Yankee Rowe officials investigate two measures that may reduce the odds of a pressurized thermal shock accident and report back by August 26. The next day, House Energy and Environment Subcommittee Chairman Peter Kostmayer called Selin on the carpet in a hearing to review the NRC's actions in the matter. The new chairman defended his decision, explaining that the equipment to test the reactor would not be ready until April 1992. Shutting the plant sooner, Selin said, would solve nothing. But he admitted more than once that "there are more uncertainties with this reactor than with any other I am aware of."

Some commission critics find hope in the public approach that Selin has taken on Yankee Rowe. Michael Mariotte, whose group has documented NRC regulatory lapses for years, is hopeful that a new wind may be blowing through the agency's Rockville, Md., corridors. "At least," says Mariotte, "he recognizes that the NRC doesn't operate in a vacuum, that you have to involve the states and the public." Mariotte noted that during his testimony to the Kostmayer committee Selin expressed res-

ervations about one-step licensing, his first public comment on the issue.

Indeed, Selin may be a tougher regulator than his predecessors. He has already called for re-examination of rules on license renewal passed by former NRC Chairman Kenneth Carr on his last day on the job. The Carr rules would have made relicensing a relatively simple process predicated on the assumption that an operating plant was in compliance with NRC regulations. A new relicensing rule is in the works.

Ironically, if Selin does stiffen the NRC's backbone, he may find himself at odds with the Bush administration and the Department of Energy. "The energy strategy calls for the equivalent of almost 300 nuclear plants by 2030, and they assume that 70 percent of existing plants would be relicensed," says Mariotte. "If the country were to have that much nuclear power by then, and we're saying there's no way they could build that many plants, then license extension would be key to that."

Right now the future of license extension is on hold. Not only are the rules being rewritten, but in the midst of the debate over Yankee Rowe, the plant's board of directors voted to postpone its license-renewal application pending the outcome of the reactor test next spring. Depending on what they find, relicensing could be set back years. The only other plant the industry is currently considering for license renewal is the Montecello plant in Minnesota, and its permit doesn't expire until 2009.

If the Rowe outcome represents a victory of sorts for anti-nuclear forces, there are more battles ahead. National energy and environmental groups are also focusing on the energy bill's provision to allow the licensing of new reactors prior to their construction. The current law mandates public hearings before and after a nuclear-power plant is built for the NRC to grant an operating permit. Scott Peters of the nuclear industry information arm USCEA, says holding hearings before and after has hampered efficiency.

"You fight all the battles—like is it safe, is the design right—and spend five to eight years building the plant," says Peters, "and then you have to go back for a licensing permit, when all these issues can be brought up again. And it can stretch out two, three, five or more years." Industry advocates will fight hard to change this.

The legislative battle over energy could start this fall. Senate Bill 1220, co-sponsored by Bennett Johnston (D-LA) and Malcolm Wallop (R-WY) and virtually mirroring the administration plan, has passed the Senate Energy Commission and is ready for a floor vote.

Ken Bussong, the director of Ralph Nader's Critical Mass Energy Project, says a growing coalition of consumer, environmental and student groups is calling for a wholesale rejection of the bill. "There is a general consensus that the bill is so bad that, even amended, it would be unacceptable," says Bussong. "And as more members of the Senate read it, they're discovering provisions they dislike."

Although the House companion bill is still in development, Hill watchers say it will likely include more emphasis on the renewable energy sources and conservation. "We could comfortably reduce energy consumption by 30 percent over the next 20 years without a disruption of the economy or a major alteration in lifestyle, using technology that exists," says Bussong.

It's in that direction, contend energy and environmental groups, that a real energy strategy lies.

Shannon Fagan is a journalist living in Washington, D.C., who specializes in environmental issues.

IN THESE TIMES AUG. 21-SEPT. 3, 1991 13



Lionel Delavigne

EDITORIAL

IN THESE TIMES

"...with liberty and justice for all"

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Congress takes a step to rein in the president

In late July the Senate sent the most significant legislative by-product of the Iran-contra affair to President Bush for his signature. The bill is a small first step toward limiting the president's ability to conduct covert activities without congressional knowledge or to take such action in violation of the Constitution and federal law. It requires the chief executive to report all covert activities to Congress in a "timely" manner, and also to authorize all such activities in writing in advance of being carried out. President Reagan did neither of these when he illegally gave Lt. Col. Oliver North and others the go-ahead to sell arms to Iran and to use some of the money to finance the contra war.

Bush is expected to sign the bill, even though he vetoed a similar measure last year. One reason may be that the bill passed the House by a vote of 419-4 and the Senate by a voice vote. Another is that Congress made some significant changes in order to get the bill past him. The most significant covers third-nation participation in covert activities and the definition of notification in a "timely" fashion.

In last year's bill the president was required to notify Congress of any "request" by a third-party individual or nation conducting covert actions on behalf of the administration. Bush had argued that this would interfere with informal diplomatic exchanges, so this time around it was changed to read that the president simply has to inform Congress that a third party will participate in a covert action without naming the party.

Bush had also objected to "timely" being defined as within 48 hours. House Intelligence Committee leaders showed some rhetorical courage this year, holding to their definition of "timely" as meaning within a few days. But they gave the president an out: a report on the bill drawn up by a House-Senate conference committee includes language acknowledging that the president may assert his constitutional authority to withhold notice for a longer time—which is what Ronald Reagan did when he took 10 months to tell Congress about arms sales to Iran, and then only after it had become public knowledge. Even so, both houses of Congress specifically rejected

the administration's idea of "timely" notice—making it more difficult for a president to justify such delays in the future.

The bill also defines covert action for the first time. Now it's official: Covert activity is that undertaken by the government "to influence political, economic or military conditions abroad, where it is intended that the role of the United States government will not be apparent or acknowledged publicly." In other words, covert action is interference in other countries' internal affairs in violation of their laws and sovereignty. And the new bill for the first time officially recognizes such activity as legitimate.

In the past such activity often went on without Congress being officially notified precisely because such activity violates norms of international behavior. Imagine, for example, the public outrage if one of the administration's target nations reciprocated and used money or mercenaries to infiltrate the United States in an attempt to destabilize our government or influence one of our national elections? But similar actions on our part against weaker nations have become so routine that Congress thinks nothing of sanctioning it legally.

Of course, if more people know about such activity it becomes more difficult to pursue. Few of the covert actions carried out by the CIA over the past 40 years would have won public approval had they been debated openly. But even though notifying congressional leaders is hardly public notice, it is a small check on a government practice that should be abandoned altogether.

That's why Bush fought so hard last year to prevent genuinely timely notification, and it's why congressional opponents of covert activity supported it, along with other members of Congress who simply want to share the power to engage in covert actions with the president.

Yet some in Congress doubt that any law can prevent presidents from continuing past practices. "In the final analysis," Rep. Anthony Beilenson (D-CA) says, "you have to rely on whether the administration you're dealing with is going to abide by the law, in its letter and spirit."

Overall, this legislation may serve as a brake on some of the more vicious covert activities so dear to leaders like Reagan and Bush. But the issue of whether or not to engage in covert action remains untouched, and the ability to do so may even be strengthened by this official recognition of the practice.

LETTERS

Basic facts

IN THE DEBATE ABOUT HEALTH-CARE WORKERS with AIDS, the following two items are being ignored:

1. There is no AIDS test (yet). What people have been calling "an AIDS test" is actually a test for the presence of antibodies to the HIV virus, which causes AIDS. A person who is HIV-positive may not develop AIDS-related complex (ARC) or AIDS for years, maybe not ever. A diagnosis of AIDS is made when an HIV-positive person develops an opportunistic infection such as Kaposi's sarcoma that is common among persons with AIDS.

2. It can take six months, possibly longer, after exposure to the AIDS virus for the body to develop antibodies. If a person has the HIV-antibody test during this period, the test will be negative even though the person has been exposed to the virus and the person is capable of transmitting the virus to someone else. Therefore, even if every health-care worker were tested for HIV antibodies every day (at enormous expense), it is not possible to identify every health-care worker (or anybody else, for that matter) capable of transmitting the AIDS virus. With currently available technology, there is no 100-percent guarantee.

These items are established facts. Every American adult who can hear and/or read should know them. Why are people (including the mainstream media) choosing to ignore them? It is inexcusable.

Jane Bolton
Omaha, Neb.

Alternative views

YOUR JUNE 25 EDITORIAL CALLS FOR "THE MAKING of a truly new American left" by "developing a new approach to politics in which an alternative world view is made explicit and the principle underlying our government's priorities is confronted directly." However, the editorial refers to John Judis' article in the same issue, which advocates "sharing the responsibilities for policing the world and encouraging democracy." Translation: Judis supported the Persian Gulf war. This is not an alternative world view; it's the standard myth. Judis simply joined the journalistic herd.

A real alternative world view starts from a moral opposition to war and an appreciation of its human cost. Michael Klare revealed in *The Nation* that the U.S. used new weapons with the same destructive power as nuclear weapons. In effect, Bush nuked Iraq. The total death toll from this unnecessary war may well exceed a quarter of a million people, but almost nobody in American public life seems to think there is any moral issue involved. Certainly not Judis: he has defended the war in about a dozen articles. Not once has he mentioned Arab deaths.

True, *In These Times* has run a large number of anti-war pieces, but you have evidently used Judis to "balance" the paper's coverage. Judis is quite important at *In These Times*. He is the Washington correspondent and regularly gets an enormous amount of space in the paper. For *In These Times*' opposition to U.S. intervention is not a matter of principle but merely a matter of opinion. Once a dependable anti-war paper, *In These Times* now has its own in-house

hawk.

Judis writes that U.S. intervention in Vietnam and Panama was wrong "because neither intervention was in America's national interest." That's not exactly principled opposition to war and imperialism, is it? It all comes down to a hard-nosed calculation of the "national interest" (whose national interest?). If the benefits outweigh the costs, or if the costs are paid by people in other countries, then it's bombs away!

John W. Farley
Henderson, Nev.

Editor's note: The position of *In These Times* is that expressed in our unsigned editorials. All signed pieces are the opinions of the authors. We do not seek to balance opinions, but our writers are free to do so. This policy has always been stated on our masthead.

Thoughts

JOHAN JUDIS' ARTICLE, "LOOKING LEFT AND RIGHT: the evolution of political direction" (*ITT*, June 12) has left readers much to think about, and to critique. Marshall Windmiller (*ITT*, July 10) has cogently analyzed Judis' use of the words "democracy" and "nationalism." It's not that Judis is totally out of touch with reality. The "left" does need to do some very serious analysis about what its principles are. But as Windmiller has indicated, the use of language in the form of clichés will not extricate this society or world from its difficulties.

An example of using jingoism instead of insight occurs in Judis' affirmation of the importance of national and state governments as instruments of public democracy. Great idea! Now, how should this be accomplished? Should we "elevate the status and income of public employees, from kindergarten teachers to civil servants, above that of divorce lawyers and defense-industry consultants"? Or should we demand that politicians and bureaucrats act to serve the common good instead of stuffing their pockets with money and inflating their egos with their hot-air rhetoric?

As all students know, the public-school system, for the most part, teaches students to value learning only for the sake of competing with other students for jobs. This system little values personal growth, creativity, cooperation, or even intellectual honesty or independence. Under these circumstances, teachers will not—and should not, in my view—be further rewarded.

As for divorce lawyers and defense-industry consultants, is it not Judis' view that we need a strong defense industry? So why not reward them handsomely? The legal profession as a whole needs to be radically reformed because it is not just. But even if

it were, it would still have much reason for its existence in a country beset by racism, sexism, class discrimination, greed and violence.

Gary Martin Cohen
Highland Park, N.J.

Complex and ambiguous

UPON READING AND REREADING GREGORY STEVENS' hostile and defensive review of Spike Lee's latest film, *Jungle Fever* (*ITT*, June 26), I feel compelled to come to the defense of both film and filmmaker.

Whatever Lee's opinions of interracial relationships—and he is as entitled as any white filmmaker to promote them in his films—*Jungle Fever* is far from a one-sided polemic either against interracial marriage or against white people, as Stevens suggests. Rather, Lee's sensitivity to the complexity of the issues and his faithful rendering of the multiple experiences and differing voices of whites and blacks, men and women, poor and upwardly mobile, native-born and immigrant, old and young, make his film powerful and believable.

Lee explores sexism, class conflicts, racism and xenophobia within racial communities as well as between them. Flipper's relationship with his crackhead brother and with their parents illustrates the guilt and alienation that accompany upward social mobility for African-Americans as for upwardly mobile white ethnics. For both Angie and Flipper, crossing racial boundaries is the outcome of their economic mobility.

Not simply an occasion to bash "white bitches," the "war council" scene courageously takes on the racial hierarchies within the black community itself—expressed most dramatically and painfully in the marriage market. This has been an issue among African-American women for a long time, one Lee might as easily have suppressed or ignored. (Michelle Wallace was accused of betraying black men for raising similar questions nearly 20 years ago in *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman*.)

The war-council scene poignantly explores the pain and divisiveness this has produced. It just may be that this scene was intended as much to confront African-Americans audiences with their own internal divisions and prejudices as to shock white filmgoers.

The oppressively patriarchal Italian-American milieu Angela inhabits is also fraught with internal class and racial tensions: in one scene a war council of Italian-American men first taunt one of their number about his mother's dark complexion, then denounce Italian-American women's alleged preference for fair-haired, fair-skinned "WASPS—White Anglo-Saxon Pricks." In

scenes such as these, Lee stresses the similarities between us as well as the prejudices and the real barriers that divide us with remarkable evenhandedness and unsparing honesty. Few white filmmaker have shared his integrity, and rarely are they taken to task for their endless depictions of racial and ethnic minority characters as drug addicts and criminals and of women as sexual playthings.

Lee is far from uncritical of his African-American characters: Flipper, an adulterer who is callous toward both women, is hardly heroic—nor is Cyrus, his "best buddy," who first congratulates Flipper for cheating on his wife and later spills the beans on him. Are we to accept Gregory Stevens' assumption that they serve only as the filmmaker's mouthpieces for nationalism and separatism?

As a filmgoer lacking Stevens' access to Spike Lee's political agenda, I found the "message" about interracial marriage far from simplistic. Perhaps Stevens missed the subplot involving Angela's ex-boyfriend Pauly, one of the film's most sympathetic characters, who sets off in one of the last scenes for form an interracial relationship of his own. In any case, the "affair" between Flipper and Angie was but a brief encounter blown out of proportion by both communities.

In *Do the Right Thing* as well as in *Jungle Fever*, Lee does what has been done all too seldom in film: he shows all of his characters, black and white, middle class and poor, men and women, immigrants and natives, as human beings with their pettiness, their foibles and their prejudices—whether against "white bitches," "octoroons," Korean grocers or African-Americans. But he also concedes all of his characters the capacity for nobility, generosity and, perhaps most importantly, growth.

For the obligatory self-disclosure, I am a white woman whose experiences dating black as well as white men have yielded only questions as to how one is to "do the right thing" in a sexist and racist society.

Laura Tabili
Tucson, Ariz.

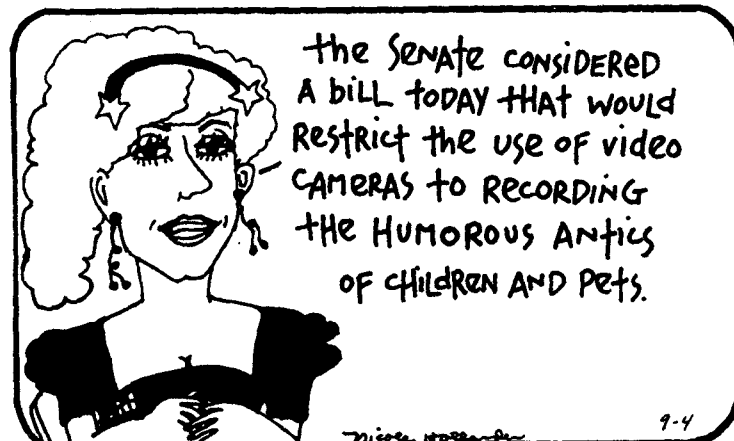
Author's query

WANTED TO INTERVIEW FOR A BOOK IN PREPARATION: Jews with Holocaust backgrounds (survivors, children of survivors, escapees, etc.) now engaged in efforts to support Palestinian human and national rights and Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation.

Please contact Hilda Silverman, (September 1991 through August 1992) c/o Mary Ingraham Bunting Institute, Radcliffe Research and Study Center, 34 Concord Ave., Cambridge, MA 02138, telephone (617) 495-0924.

by Nicole Hollander

SYLVIA





Vermont looks to treat sick health system

By Ethan Parke

INSTEAD OF WAITING FOR THE U.S. CONGRESS to enact a Canadian-style health-care system, Vermont should go ahead and do it on its own. That's the view of a growing number of labor leaders and advocacy groups in the Green Mountain State.

Last fall, a fledgling consumer organiza-

tion, the Vermont Consumers' Campaign for Health, worked with a newly elected state senator to draft a bill for phasing out the health-insurance industry while phasing in universal coverage and annual global budgeting for hospitals. Modeled in part after a proposal introduced earlier in California, the bill remained in committee during the first half of the legislative biennium, while supporters tried to spread the word through

informational meetings around the state.

Then in June, senior citizens, union representatives, teachers, state legislators, social-service professionals and others packed the Vermont State Senate chamber and announced the beginning of coordinated effort to build support for the measure.

Democratic state Sen. Cheryl Rivers, the bill's sponsor, sounded upbeat about the legislation's chances when the legislature returns. "With positive thinking and smart thinking," she said, "we can lead the way." Rivers predicted that Vermont would be the "Saskatchewan of the U.S.," referring to the Canadian province that pioneered in developing Canada's publicly funded universal health-care system.

Rivers' bill would set up a public authority to reimburse all medical, dental, mental health and long-term care providers in the state. All residents would be guaranteed access to care without out-of-pocket expenses. Cost control would be achieved by administrative efficiency, hospital budgeting and through the encouragement of salaried practice rather than fee for service.

To pass the bill, many legislators feel the state's business community must first be convinced it can save money by exchanging ever-increasing employee-insurance premiums for probable new taxes that would be needed. While major business leaders have yet to endorse Rivers' initiative, advocates are hoping they will prefer it to reforms based on mandatory employee insurance, an approach that has been widely proposed at the national level.

Labor's role: Vermont labor leaders have already lent their full support. Vermont State Labor Council President Ralph Crippen, offering his endorsement, even reported a positive response to the Vermont proposal from national AFL-CIO officials.

Backers of the bill are also cautiously optimistic about winning support from the medical community. A recent petition drive among Vermont physicians, calling for a state or national health program, quickly garnered more than 100 names and the approval of the director of the Vermont Medical Society, but so far only a few doctors have stepped forward to work for the Canadian-style legislation.

Lt. Gov. Howard Dean, who is a physician himself, voiced some of the first specific criticism of the bill when he warned that he would not support a plan that excluded medical providers from its governing body. The current draft of the Vermont proposal sets up a governing board of seven appointees who must have no financial ties to the medical industry. The bill was written this way to prevent conflicts of interest in rate-setting and budget negotiations.

Although this issue may seem minor, it relates to the important and potentially divisive question of cost control. While most people now agree that U.S. health-care spending is getting out of hand, the medical establishment seems to have a different explanation for this than do consumer advocates.

In an effort to find common ground, Vermont health-care advocates have focused their attacks on the fragmented, profit-hungry insurance industry and its accompanying administrative waste. They calculate that simply by eliminating the unnecessary paperwork and billing of the present system, enough money could be saved to cover all the 45,000 Vermonters who are presently uninsured.

A lone voice of dissent from this view comes from a highly respected, politically progressive health-care expert, Dr. Milton Terris. Terris, who edits the *Journal of Public Health Policy* from his home near Burlington, insists that the administrative savings of a single-payer Canadian-style system are exaggerated. Only by changing the fee-for-service reimbursement structure and reducing the number of medical specialists can costs substantially be checked, he argues.

Terris criticizes the Canadian health-care system at a time when many progressives are touting it as a model of reform for the U.S. Recently Terris' criticisms have gained credence by the increasing discussion in Canada of "our health-care crisis." Both the federal government and the provinces have been struggling to find enough money to keep the system functioning, and many consumers have become alarmed at suggestions for enacting user fees.

But for Vermonters, the fact remains: here you are either insured and paying too much for it, or uninsured and waiting for financial catastrophe to strike. Just across the border in Quebec, people don't have these worries.

Although it's hard to imagine the Vermont legislature tackling anything visionary after a session of wrangling over budget cuts and tax increases, there are hopeful signs. At least one conservative Republican state senator has committed himself to the idea of fundamental health-care reform, and the press is finally becoming aware that health care is a major issue.

Vermont's independent U.S. representative, Bernie Sanders, has also been talking up reform ideas. Sanders has introduced a bill in the House that would provide a waiver of federal Medicare and Medicaid requirements, so that states could set up Canadian-style health programs without losing federal money. The hope is that the clamor for change will continue to grow, so that more politicians will be forced to respond.

Ethan Parke is active in the health-care movement in Vermont.

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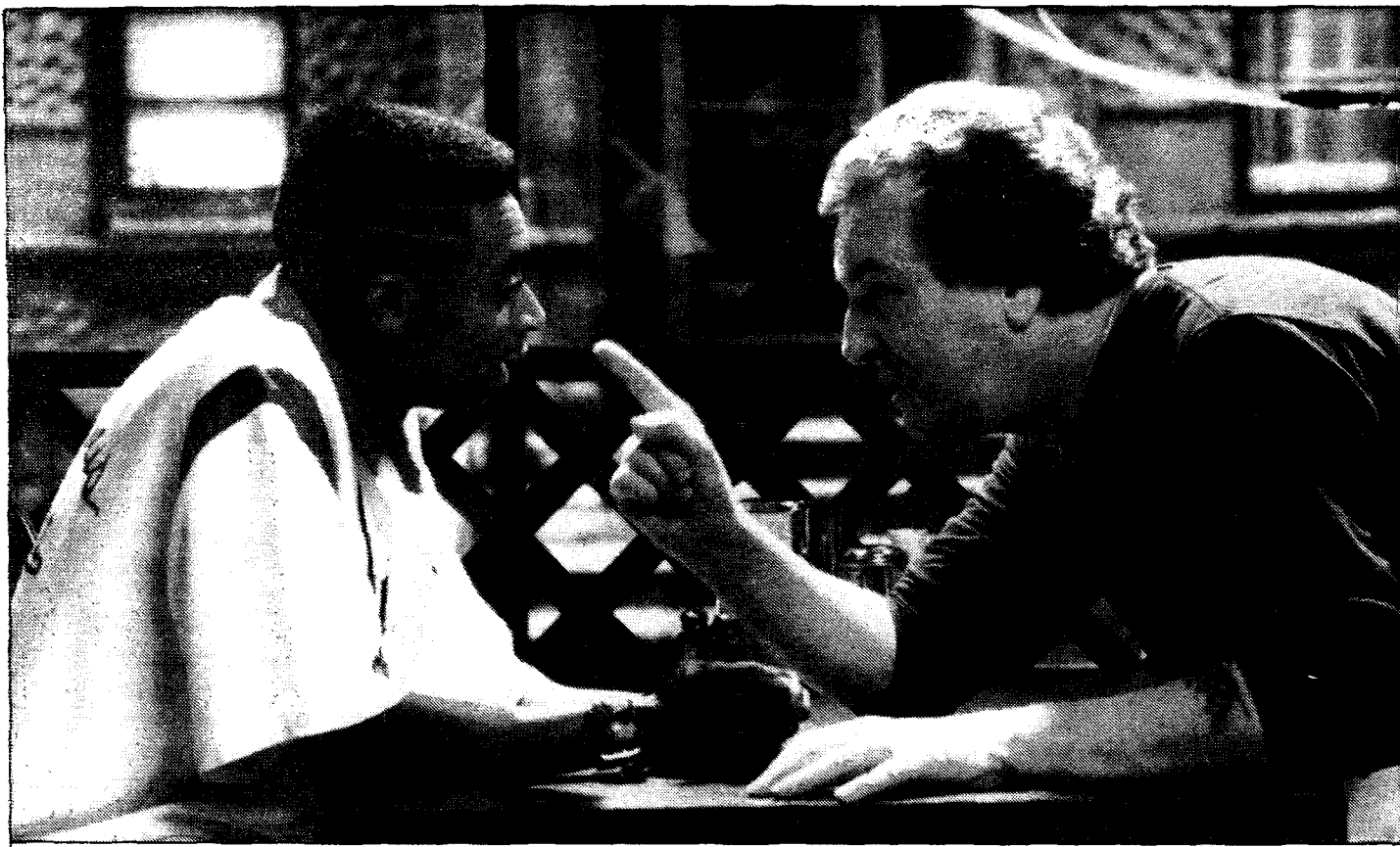
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Unsolicited showings of Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing* prompted fruitful interactions recently in South Africa.

Sanctions look different from Africa

By Norman Oder

THE SCENE: AN ADVANCED CLASS AT THE University of the Western Cape, South Africa's most politically progressive university, in May. "Has anybody heard of Paul Robeson?" asks the professor, a recently returned political exile and high official in the African National Congress (ANC).

No response from the students, all members of the small, university-going (African, "coloured," Indian) elite that eventually will help run the country.

The professor smiles weakly. "That cultural boycott I helped organize really worked, didn't it?" he says.

The professor asks about several other international cultural events or figures. Each time he gets the same blank response. Each time his comment drips with a bit more irony.

The cultural boycott, however, continues, thanks to the ANC and its U.S. allies, who seem more concerned about political correctness than the reality "on the ground" in South Africa or the wishes of many progressive cultural workers there. In May, a mostly American group including anti-apartheid activists such as musician Little Steven (Van Zandt) renewed the boycott at a United Nations summit in Los Angeles. Only a few South Africans were there, though many disagree with the ANC on this issue. "It's a mockery that our destiny is being decided miles away," trumpeter Hugh Masekela said in May.

American director Spike Lee won't let his movies be shown in South Africa. "I think it's important to show solidarity with one's brothers," Lee told an interviewer in May. He said he's waiting for governmental changes that are "more than publicity stunts."

Doing the wrong thing: Unfortunately, Lee hasn't distinguished between his "brothers" in the ANC and his equally anti-apartheid "brothers" who may disagree

with the ANC. Also, though the changes in South Africa are less than George Bush portrays them to be, they are also more than publicity stunts. The country is in a murky transition. Democratic organizations are gaining space and pressuring a still powerful state. Power will not change hands quickly, as it did in Eastern Europe. Recognizing this, some leading artists as well as progressive organizations such as the South African Musicians' Alliance now argue against a boycott. Isolation served its purpose, they say. Now people need cultural empowerment.

Organized decades ago to pressure the apartheid state, the boycott, like economic sanctions, has been a double-edged sword. It aims to make things worse so they can get better. If blacks are denied access to culture, that's a price worth paying to jolt whites out of their comfort. Some South African cultural workers say the boycott helped nurture local cultural organizations, while others say the effort required to monitor the selective boycott—since 1987, anti-apartheid groups have sanctioned limited cultural contact—sapped organizational strength and raised the specter of censorship.

The situation is ripe for satire. In a recent set of sketches called *The Dogs Must be Crazy*, Cape Town's Community Arts Project portrayed a "Congress of Cultural Bulldogs" ready to use the notorious "necklace" on anyone challenging the orthodoxy of the boycott.

The strongest argument against the boycott, however, seems to be that black South Africans need more access to skills and knowledge. South Africa gets a lot of American culture, but it's some of the worst—the most popular television show is "Who's the Boss." It could use some of the best.

Audience reaction: When I visited South Africa, I brought a video of Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing*. I hardly dwelled on the

idea that I was breaking a boycott, or that the government might confiscate the film if it checked my luggage. I simply wanted to show South Africans something of black America beyond my white, middle-class experience. Also, I knew that the movie's references to South Africa, and to American issues with relevance to South Africa, would interest the audience.

I showed *Do the Right Thing* more than a dozen times, mainly to blacks but also to whites. I became used to seeing nods of recognition when Smiley, the retarded photographer, painfully sputters, "We still must fight apart-HATE" and when the hot-head Buggin' Out asks that Nelson Mandela be placed on the pizzeria's Wall of Fame.

One veteran of the freedom movement, like many blacks a severe critic of the U.S., said the Mandela mention helped convince him that Americans' interest in South Africa was genuine, not merely fashionable.

American diplomats in South Africa, discussing the need for peaceful change, like to offer the Martin Luther King Jr. quote that appears on screen at the end of the film. They don't quote Malcolm X on the appropriateness of violence, but Malcolm X's words—which follow King's in the film—are an equally valid example of American black thinking. They're even more appropriate, considering the historic role of violence in the South African struggle.

The movie raises other issues that have counterparts in South Africa: boycotting as a tactic, community responsibility, the generation gap and police brutality. And in a country where much opposition culture has been agitprop, international artists can provide some breadth. In the U.S., Lee may be accused of didacticism, but many South African viewers appreciated *Do the Right Thing* for its ambiguity, its portrayal of faults and virtues in both blacks and whites. The movie prompted several conversations about the formation of racist ideas.

Sure, some American culture might make South African whites feel more complacent, but Lee's films won't. The whites who saw *Do the Right Thing* were riveted and troubled. Some recognized the pizza man Sal and his sons, embattled, hateful and hopeful, as something of a metaphor for white South Africans.

Many people who saw *Do the Right Thing* asked to see it again. One student organizer borrowed it for several showings because he wanted his friends to understand the seriousness behind the humor and profanity. Some people asked me about Spike Lee's other films. (Imagine *Jungle Fever* playing there!) No one mentioned the cultural boycott.

Norman Oder is a freelance writer who recently spent four months as a student at the University of the Western Cape in South Africa.

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Jim Thompson: Sleep with the Devil

By Michael J. McCauley
Mysterious Press, 340 pp., \$19.95

By Mark G. Judge

ALMOST 15 YEARS AFTER HIS death, Jim Thompson is finally enjoying the popularity he sought his entire life. Three of his books—*The Kill-Off*, *After Dark*, *My Sweet* and *The Grifters*—were made into motion pictures last year, posthumously capping the tortured achievements of one of America's finest writers.

That last bit is not a misprint. Thompson's contribution to American literature rivals Twain's or *The Catcher in the Rye*, and it is a unique American irony that none of Thompson's books was in print in this country when he died in 1977. It took the French—compensation for Jerry Lewis?—to ignite the Jim Thompson renaissance that exploded here in the '80s. Thankfully, nearly all of his 29 novels are once again available.

Boom and bust: Michael J. McCauley accurately describes Thompson as an "all-American Sisyphus" in the prologue to his new biography of "America's greatest noir writer." Born in Oklahoma in 1906, Thompson learned the caprices of capitalism at an early age. The son of a lawyer and oilman whose prospects and millionaire lifestyle both went bust before the Great Depression, Thompson became a writer, he joked later in his life, to learn how to do everything else. Pipeline steppolejack, bellboy, burlesque actor, caddy, timekeeper, grifter, Thompson worked himself to a nervous breakdown before he was 30. Alcoholic despair plagued him the rest of his life.

Like his characters, Thompson was a paradox. A large, physically imposing man, he nonetheless was shy, withdrawn and obsequious to the editors and later Hollywood producers he petitioned with his work. A family man and drifter—the Thompsons moved to Oklahoma, Texas, Nebraska, San Diego and New



Thompson in the cold cold ground, but still hot hot hot in Hollywood

York in search of work—Thompson's only steady work came as director for the Works Progress Administration in the '30s, writing *The Oklahoma State Guide Book* and, later, *A Labor History of Oklahoma*. He resigned when *A Labor History* caused a controversy between management and workers; Thompson was accused of harboring communist infiltrators in the WPA, a preposterous accusation that didn't stick. But Thompson managed to secure a fellowship from the Rockefeller Foundation to write.

If the foundation had known what they were paying for, they might have thought twice. In the '50s (according to McCauley, the '40s are lost years Thompson spent in asylums and detox wards), Thompson

created some of the sickest and most sadistic characters in contemporary fiction. Although books such as *Savage Night*, *A Hell of a Woman* and *Pop. 1280* were sold for a quarter and marketed as breezy potboilers for traveling salesmen and deadbeats ("for those who can take their fiction strong," read an advertisement for 1946's *Heed the Thunder*), Thompson's prose often outshone that of his ivory-tower contemporaries.

A natural storyteller who captured the particular argot of his low-life characters, Thompson had a touch for terse, telling detail and the gripping psychological confessional. As Geoffrey O'Brien wrote in his afterword to Lizard Books' 1985 reissue of *Savage Night*, "With his drawling raconteur's voice, his beautifully

modulated storytelling rhythms and his endless stock of anecdote and naturalistic color, he sets us up for a sucker punch in which the bottom drops out of everything: location, narrative, personality itself."

Center cannot hold: Indeed, culpability is at the vortex of the twisted vision of this "dimestore Dostoevsky": in Jim Thompson's universe, everyone is guilty. There's no honest man, no Philip Marlowe or Mike Hammer to provide a moral anchor to the murders, cons and disembowelments.

Thompson's characters live in a metaphysical vacuum with "no familiar thing to cling to." In Europe, he's been compared to Kafka, Dostoevsky, Celine and Sartre. McCauley adds a new giant to the list—Walker Percy: "Inherent in both Percy and Thompson is the belief that these alienated, psychotic souls are the natural outcome of a world—20th-century America—where the old rules no longer apply but seem upside down or indeterminable."

So what distinguishes *The Killer Inside Me*—considered Thompson's masterpiece—from, say, *American Psycho*? While characters in both suffer from motiveless, existential alienation, Thompson's pen is blessed with stylistic direction that produces wickedly witty scenes (in *The Killer Inside Me*, Sheriff Lou Ford literally bores his victims to death with folksy platitudes) and a chilling glimpse, as McCauley puts it, into "the unknowable, unexplainable capacity for evil within a single human heart."

Of course, Thompson was writing for the dime-store thrill-seekers of

the '50s, and in the rush to move paperbacks he came up with his share of stinkers. *The Alcoholics*, *The Golden Gizmo* and *Child of Rage* are among some of his artistic failures, and McCauley's awkward interpretations of everything Thompson committed to paper are the major drawbacks of *Sleep with the Devil*. Most of the biography reads like a college term paper, rotely dissecting every

MYSTERIES

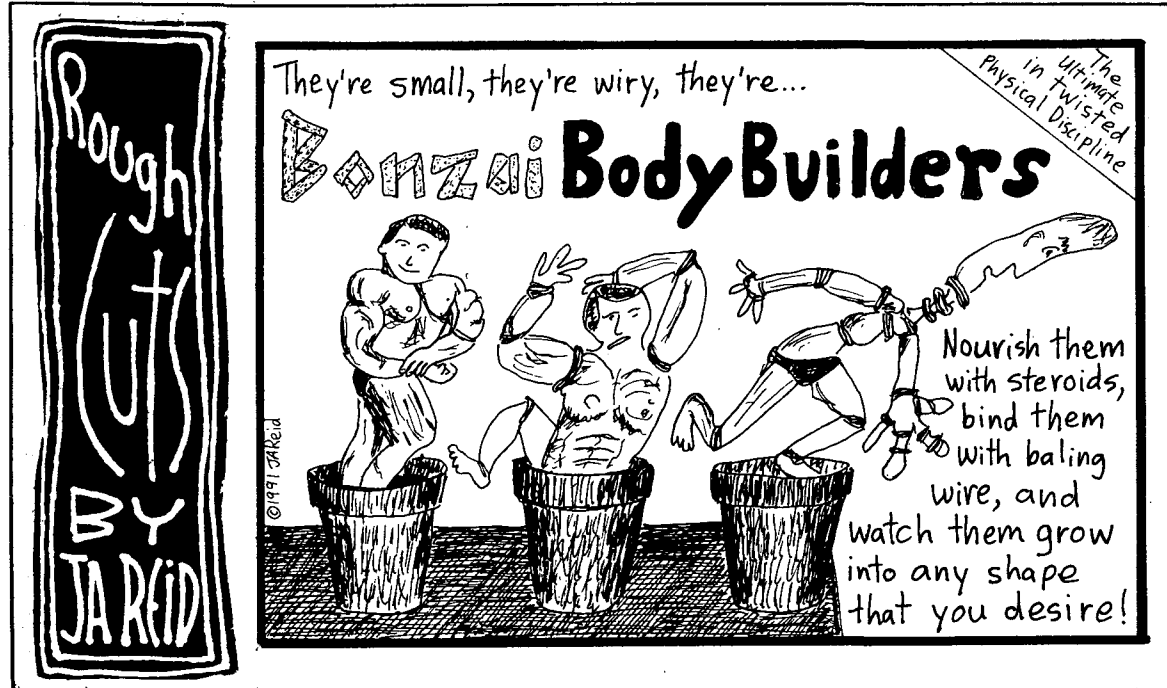
plot device and character nuance without a coherent overview of what drove the creative hand behind the typewriter.

It isn't until the tail end of *Sleep with the Devil* that McCauley offers any insight into where Thompson fits into the literature of post-war America, and by then—if you've read that far—it's too late. McCauley claims that Thompson's obsessions were rooted in the guilt he felt about leaving his father to die in a nursing home, but he offers no analysis of Thompson's work as a major psychotic disturbance in the staid and steady apple-pie '50s.

Right place, out of time: In the early '80s, the Hollywood that had rejected Thompson (in the '50s he worked with fan Stanley Kubrick on *The Killing* and *Paths of Glory*, but was relegated to second-rate TV teleplays by the mid-'60s) suddenly rediscovered him. French producer/director Bertrand Tavernier adapted *Pop. 1280* for the screen (*Coup de Torchon*, 1981) to wide acclaim, garnering an Academy Award nomination for best foreign film. This touched off an avalanche of interest in Thompson's work that began with Zomba Books of London and quickly spread back to the States. By the end of the decade, most of his titles were again in circulation, and with the cinematic releases of *The Grifters* and *After Dark*, *My Sweet*, both Siskel and Ebert and Patrick Goldstein of the *Los Angeles Times* noted that the hottest writer in Hollywood had been dead for 13 years.

Unfortunately, Thompson can't cash in on the belated good luck that eluded him his entire life. And success has its drawbacks. Publishers Vintage Crime now have the rights to four Thompson books previously published by Black Lizard and are offering the new line in absurdly wide-margined and wildly expensive editions. My advice is to rummage through the stacks of your local secondhand bookstore and try to find the Black Lizard editions, which are replete with lurid, ersatz pulp covers (or, better yet, find the originals themselves). The introduction and afterward in the Black Lizard editions will tell you more than McCauley's well-intentioned but misdirected biography can. It's a second-rate treatment of a first-rate writer.

Mark G. Judge is a writer living in Maryland.



By Jonathan Kozol
Crown Publishers, 288 pp., \$20

SEVERAL YEARS AGO, MY PARTNER and I came face to face with the reality of public education in New York City. Justin, then seven, was about to enter second grade, and Aaron, then five, was about to start kindergarten. Relatives and friends regularly inquired about our plans for the boys' education. Surely, they cautioned, the neighborhood school was out. Justin and Aaron would be the only white children there; they would never learn to read, write or add and they would never get into a decent high school, let alone college. How could we, as responsible adults, act in a way that would forever foreclose their futures?

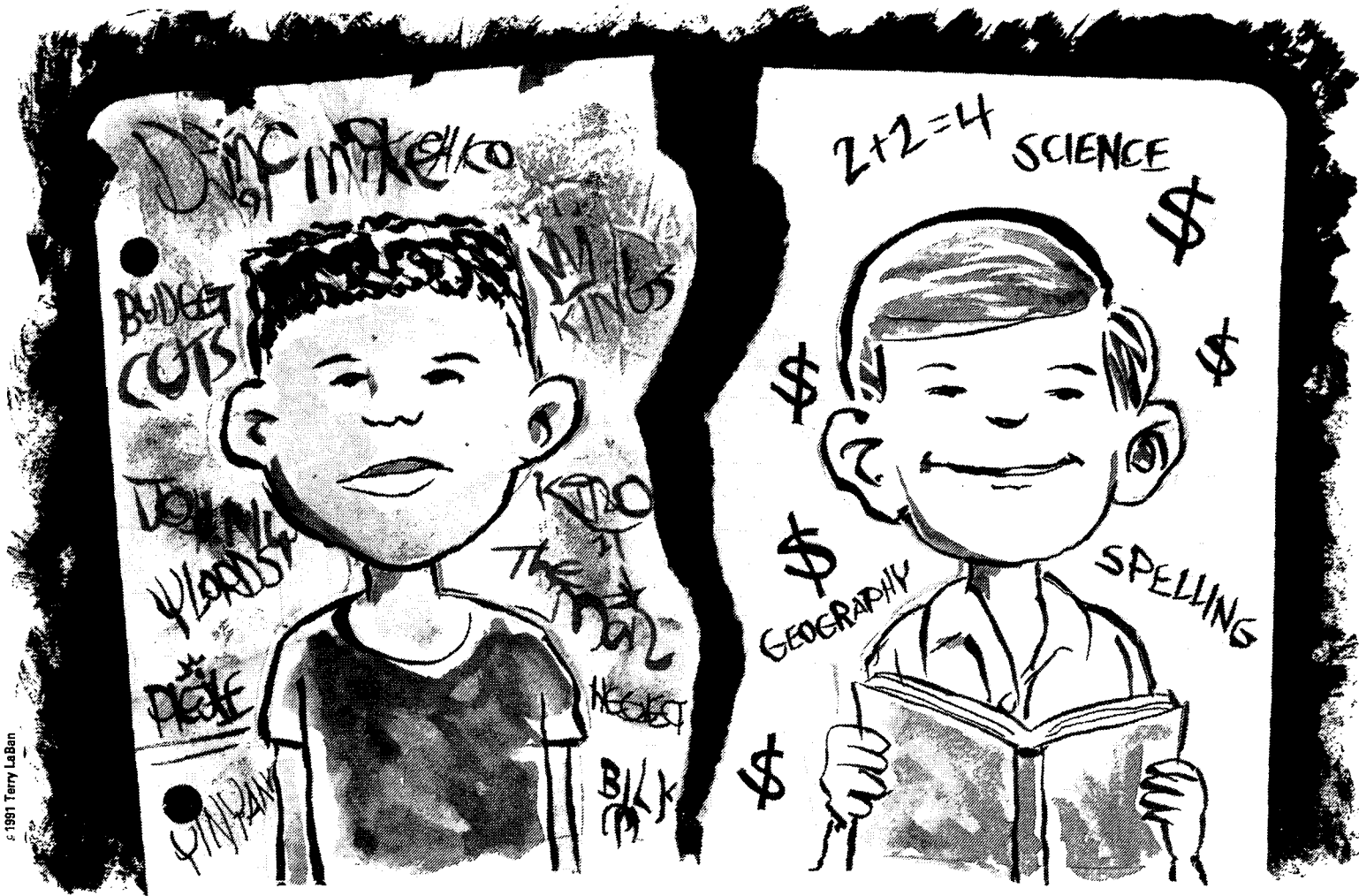
Needless to say, hour upon hour was spent debating the merits and demerits of P.S. 152. We did not have the money for a private school but questioned the wisdom of trying to get a loan. Was the school really that bad? Slowly, carefully, with our community's doubts and admonitions resonating, we eventually made our decision. We'd start the boys in public school and see how they did.

The lucky few: Seven years later, Justin is gearing up to enter ninth grade at Hunter High School—an elite, public junior and senior high he tested into in sixth grade. Classes are small. Students get lots of individual attention, and, unlike P.S. 152, the program is predominantly white and Asian.

Aaron, on the other hand, does not do as well on standardized tests. But he is also in an enriched public-school program, one in which there is a photography class and an occasional class trip to break up the monotony of day-to-day learning. Although classes are large—30 per room is average—the program is multiracial and the teachers, with few exceptions, are energetic and caring.

Yet, despite Justin and Aaron's experiences, experiences that disprove local naysayers, I know they are exceptions, white boys treated with kid gloves by a system that is, at best, chaotic and punitive. Evidence of a more typical reality is everywhere. On our corner, for example, is Dittmas Junior High School, a building one avoids walking near when classes are in session. Boys—young men, really—spend entire days standing around.

A local cop tells us that Ditmas students have been terrorizing store owners along the area's commercial strip. His statement is meant to calm us down after Justin is mugged on his way home. But it not only touches us in our neighborhood; every day we encounter adults "educated" in New York City who can barely read and write, and it is *frustrating, albeit pitiful*.



And it is not only pervasive in the Big Apple. According to Jonathan Kozol, author of *Savage Inequalities*, a shocking look at the disparities between urban and suburban school systems, the U.S. is in the throes of dealing with a 20-year legacy of separate and unequal education, something he calls an "educational caste system." This system renders the majority of low-income children, most of them black and brown, unfit for college and the professions, while at the same time guaranteeing those from wealthy districts "the inheritance of an ascendant role in our society."

The way the system is enforced, he continued, is through an archaic funding formula that ensures that poor districts receive only a fraction of what they need. As a result, "in 1989, Chicago spent some \$5,500 for each student in its secondary schools. This may be compared to an investment of some \$8,500 to \$9,000 in each high school student in the highest-spending suburbs in the North."

High and low: Thus, New Trier High School, in a Chicago suburb, can provide students with access to seven gyms, fencing and wrestling rooms, studios for dance instruction and an Olympic-size pool. Courses in music, art and drama, modern and classical languages, philosophy, computer science, criminal justice and aeronautics are offered. Class size averages 24, and each student has a faculty adviser she or he shares with 23 others. Considered one of the best schools in the state, 93 per-

cent of its students are college bound. The community is pristine; the district provides an average of approximately \$340,000 worth of taxable property to finance each student's education.

At the other end of the state, in East St. Louis, Ill., the picture is quite different. Here, in a city that is 98

percent black, pregnant women must travel outside city limits for obstetrical services. There is no regular trash collection, and 75 percent of the population subsists on welfare payments. According to Kozol, "the city, which by night and day is clouded by the fumes that pour from vents and smokestacks at the Pfizer and Monsanto chemical plants, has one of the highest rates of child asthma in America."

Raw sewage oozes into children's play areas, and lead levels are an unbelievably high 10,000 parts per million. Hovering near bankruptcy, the city relies on more than 70 "permanent" substitute teachers, who are paid only \$10,000 a year. Kindergarten classes squeeze in 30 pupils; fourth- to 12th-grade classes have upwards of 35. Science labs are 30 to 50 years outdated, and audio-visual equipment is so old that teachers are advised not to use it. Gym equipment is nonexistent.

This disparity gets played out across the U.S. Camden, N.J.; Detroit, Mich.; Oakland, Calif. and the Bronx are some of the better known disaster areas. Kozol describes school

after school where a lack of supplies is the rule, where classes are held in converted coat rooms and auditoriums without windows, where buildings have either too much or too little heat, where libraries are stocked with books discarded by wealthy suburbs, and where students enter classrooms hungry and tired.

Money, argues Kozol, would go a long way in resolving these inequities. "If you don't believe that money makes a difference," he quotes one teacher, "let your children go to school in Camden. Trade with our children, not beginning in the high schools. Start when they're little, in the first or second grade."

But, of course, white, middle-class people aren't willing to do this. Citing a California lawsuit in which a judge ordered that a new funding formula be created to equalize education, Kozol documents a brutal backlash: Proposition 13. "Today, in all but 5 percent of California districts, funding levels are within \$300 of each other. Although in this respect the plaintiffs won the equity they sought, it is to some extent a victory of losers. Though the state ranks eighth in per-capita income in the nation, the share of its income that now goes to public education is a meager 3.8 percent—placing it 46th among the 50 states. Its average class size is the largest in the nation."

The rich, even the middle class, no longer grace the public schools with their presence, "choosing," instead, private education. The cynicism of those who charge that equality for all results in mediocrity for all is born out by the California example, if only in that state legislators and residents have opted to fund districts as minimally as possible. The bitterness of this approach, making the achievement of a lowest

common denominator the strategy of choice, mocks the decision's intent and is a cruel blow in the face of growing adult illiteracy and dropout rates.

Making the grade: Kozol aims to make us act and change this horror. His words are passionate and heartfelt. In fact, his anger at the racism and classism that undergirds education is contagious. I closed the book wanting to organize and join people who are similarly distressed about the writing off of thousands of young people that is now going on in every U.S. city. But this is also the book's greatest weakness, for while Kozol is a brilliant journalist capable of painting stark and poignant pictures of children in crisis, he is no political strategist.

How do we convince suburban residents—how do I convince the parents of students at Hunter High School—that their children are not more deserving than others simply because they work hard and test well? How do we convince people that it is in their long-term interest to give up some of their power, prestige and, yes, money for the lofty goal of fairness? Where, and how, do we begin?

Although Kozol makes no attempt to delve into these areas, he has nonetheless written a brilliant descriptive plea for decency. Like Michael Harrington's *The Other America*, it homes in on realities few middle-class people see.

Whether strategies for change result from it is anybody's guess, but it would be tragic, indeed, to find remaindered copies of *Savage Inequalities* in the dank, rain-drenched library of East St. Louis, Ill., instead of in statehouses across the country. ■

Eleanor J. Bader is a writer living in New York.

By John Otis

Reggae legacy: big slack attack

BOB MARLEY INTRODUCED JAMAICAN reggae music to the world 20 years ago with pulsating anthems of political protest and religious faith.

Today, reggae chart-topper Shabba Ranks sings about oral sex, girls with gonorrhea and his attempts to pass a "trailer load a girls" duty-free through Jamaican customs.

"Slackness"—the use of lewd, sexual lyrics—has become the staple in Jamaican dance halls, where deejays rap in a thick patois to reggae rhythms. But slackness doesn't sit well with many old-guard reggae artists who say it degrades women as well as the music.

"Those who get the most media coverage are these slack deejays who go under the women's dresses

MUSIC

and begin to tear the female anatomy apart," says Adugo Onoura, a music promoter in Kingston, the Jamaican capital.

Mental slavery: With songs like "Slavedriver" and "Equal Rights," Marley, Peter Tosh and others made reggae the grass-roots protest music of Jamaica in the '70s. They sang of black power, the Rastafarian faith, apartheid and the plight of the "sufferers," the term for Kingston's slum-dwellers.

"Emancipate yourself from mental slavery; none but ourselves can free our minds," Marley sang in "Redemption Song."

Marley even played benefit gigs for Michael Manley, a socialist and union leader who was elected prime minister on a platform of sweeping political reforms. "Better Must Come," a reggae hit by Delroy Wilson, became Manley's 1972 campaign theme.

But by 1981 Marley was dead of brain cancer and Manley had been swept out of office by Edward Seaga, a conservative businessman and one of Kingston's early music promoters. Manley returned to power in 1989 but had ditched socialism.

By then most Jamaicans had grown cynical about politicians. The hopes of ghetto youths shifted from political reform to owning a BMW car. In turn, so-called "conscious" reggae has taken a back seat to the dance-hall toasters, whose agenda rarely goes beyond guns, money and "punaani," patois slang for "vagina."

"The themes of the '80s recordings are ... characterized by their apparent political conservatism and an overwhelming preoccupation with slackness," according to Carolyn Cooper, a professor at the University of the West Indies in Kingston.

Ironically, slack deejays are immensely popular in the squalid slums of Kingston—the same rough-and-tumble ghettos that spawned street poets like Marley and Tosh who attempted to mobilize the



It's a long way from Bob Marley's revolutionary reggae to today's slack music.

masses.

Slack music "is the opposite of what Bob Marley was dealing with," says Mutabaruka, a reggae dub poet who sings about slavery, South Africa and other black struggles. "The [new] music is very sexual, very materialistic."

Not slacking off: Purveyors of slackness, however, say the people want to forget about politics and their daily grind as they bump and grind in the dance hall.

"Politics is poli-tricks," says Kingston rapper Sugar D, sitting in the scorching Kingston sun outside a recording studio. "You have to do songs to please the people."

Slack deejays say sex has always been a part of music—they just confront it head on, without editing for middle-class prudes.

"It's raw. It's powerful. It's what

the people in the ghetto love," says Tony Soyemi, a producer at the Music Asylum recording studio in Kingston. "There are still people doing conscious reggae, but it's not as commercially successful."

Shabba Ranks, who grew up in Kingston's shantytowns, realized the dream of thousands of ghetto youth when he recently signed a recording contract with Sony. "Trailer Load a Girls" is all over Jamaican radio. Shabba's other hits include "Gun Inna Baggie," "Wicked in Bed" and "Dem Bow," a song about the reluctance of macho Jamaican men to admit they engage in oral sex.

Shabba Ranks follows a long line of X-rated deejays. Perhaps the most famous, Yellowman, a black albino named for the color of his skin, rose to stardom with such hits as "Want a Virgin," "Diseases" and "Bedroom

Bazooka."

Lovindeer, another slack stylist, holds up women's panties on stage as he performs his signature turn, "Pantyman," a burlesque of Sammy

"Politics is poli-tricks," says one deejay, voicing a popular sentiment.

Davis Jr.'s "Candyman." He also makes fun of gays with his song "Bump-up," about anal intercourse.

"Dance Hall Night" at the Reggae Sunsplash festival in Montego Bay last month resembled a playground of argument, as each deejay who took the stage boasted of having the most girlfriends and the biggest "bazooka."

"It keeps getting slacker and slacker," says Carlene Samuels of Tuff Gong studio in Kingston, where Marley used to cut records. "If you're in the ghetto, you want to come out and do what Shabba Ranks did. ... The ghetto star has to have catchy lyrics, something that all the kids in the streets will be saying in two

weeks' time."

But while young people dance belly to belly, others complain that slack music is tearing apart the moral fabric of society.

Feminist groups in particular have complained that the deejays encourage violence against women. At the same time, young girls are some of the most devoted fans of deejay "dons."

There are a handful of women deejays, such as Shelly Thunder and Sister Carol, whose lyrics can be risqué. They don't, however, approach the lewd level of their male colleagues.

Slack backlash: To some observers, the slackness issue has been exaggerated. They point out that a number of deejays sing romantic or socially conscious music. Deejay Josey Wales, tired of the flap, even sings a song about riding into town to clean up the slack dance halls.

Despite his well-intentioned rhythms, Wales' song "Slackness Done" was drowned out by the popularity of Shabba Ranks and others.

Others say dance-hall deejays are being slammed because the music comes from the slums. They point out that it took Marley to bring reggae uptown and that even his songs were considered rough, ghetto music until he rose to international fame.

Dennis Howard, program director of an all-reggae radio station, credits deejays with reviving reggae's popularity overseas. Tour bookings for all types of reggae artists have increased since the deejays first caught on in the early '80s. While they lack the popularity of the new breed of rappers, bands such as Black Uhuru, Ziggy Marley and the Melody Makers and others continue to make fierce political statements, Howard adds.

Dance hall has ruled Jamaica for the past decade, yet Tuff Gong's Samuels says the music suffers from the flash-in-the-pan syndrome.

Marley wrote scores of reggae classics and was proclaimed a national hero after his death. Thousands of fans make the pilgrimage to 56 Hope Road, Marley's Kingston home, which is now a museum. And during his visit to Jamaica last month, South African black leader Nelson Mandela quoted Tosh, Marley's former bandmate, as he urged Jamaicans to "Get up! Stand up! Stand up for your rights!"

In contrast, few people can imagine a future shrine for the likes of Shabba Ranks, Ninjaman or Cutty Ranks, Jamaica's reigning rappers. Deejays, many of whom can't even play an instrument, are not as talented as their reggae predecessors, and few show real staying power, according to Samuels.

"I can barely remember last year's rages," she adds. "Stars come and go really fast."

John Otis is a journalist based in Panama.



Studs: The Newly Bed Game

By Andrew Strickman

EACH RECENT DECADE HAS HAD A television show that mirrored its sexual attitudes. In the '70s it was *The Dating Game*, where women and men selected the perfect date—sight un-

TELEVISION

seen—by asking each other canned questions. The dream date took place somewhere exotic—with separate bedrooms and a chaperone from the show.

In the '80s it was *Love Connection*, which brought the idea of match-making out of the Dark Ages. The audience was able to choose who the contestant should go on a date with after seeing videotaped testimonials from the prospective love interest. There were no exotic locales; men (of course) were supposed to come up with a creative, fun date that lasted no later than the stroke of midnight.

Now, almost two years into the new decade, Fox-TV has come up with the dating show *America* in the '90s deserves. It's called *Studs*. Once again, the idea of man as a superhuman sexual dynamo and woman as his love slave rings across the land.

The show can be entertaining—if you ignore what is going on before and after the half-hour segment. The reality of the game is for two male contestants to each go on blind dates with three women contestants (although the women are not portrayed as contestants, rather as pieces of the game's machinery).

Women in charge: In essence, however, the women are the ones in control. Before the show, the women are quizzed about the dates and the men must guess which woman gave which response.

The men on the show tend to be quite high on themselves, and the point of this show, plain and simple, is sex. For people with a fair semblance of intelligence and maturity, the show can nonetheless be fun. The problem is that the contestants do not fit this description. Admittedly, they must respond to inane questions such as "How did you like Shane's

looks?" But their answers are almost always of similar or lower caliber. "His butt was so outrageous, I had to feel it for myself." When the host of the game asked the woman to elaborate, Alison—a 19-year-old student—responded, "He cooked me dinner, and when he was washing the dishes he took off his shirt and I could see his butt. And I was, like, standing over the counter, saying, 'I gotta touch that butt!'"

The responses the women give seem designed to stimulate the libidos of the audience. Occasionally, the three women's answers take on a parallel quality that suggests that the

Once again, the idea of man as a superman sexual dynamo and woman as his love slave rings across the land.

show may not be as spontaneous as it pretends. Case in point: three women were asked if there was anything memorable about a date. They responded, "He made me sick as a dog," "He made me sweat like a pig," and "He made me howl like a mon-

key!"

Even the show's host, quite-average comedian Mark DeCarlo, goes too far for the contestants. One woman responded to a question about romance on the date with a typically raunchy response: "I was still sore in the morning!" After finding out her lips were sore from kissing, DeCarlo presses the women to find out why she doesn't remember the end of the movie the two had been watching. The audience was cheering him on, while the woman seemed embarrassed. Often the audience moans or boos when it is revealed that there was no romance or only a quick peck on the cheek.

Velcro heart-on: The final segment of the show has the men basically building up their own egos. The man is asked if the women unanimously chose him or his counterpart in response to questions about who is most likely to: write poetry, age gracefully, put a sock in his pants, crush a beer can on his forehead, find 100 uses for baby oil, pose for *Playgirl*, etc. During the game, each correct response earns the male contestant a Velcro heart.

At the end of the game, the guy with the most hearts is crowned "King Stud" and gets to take the woman of his choice on a dream date anywhere, but only if she has selected him as well. Unlike the *Dating Game*, there are no chaperones, and only one hotel room is implied. Only one question remains in my mind—are condoms paid for by the show or by the contestant?

Maybe it would seem more believable if the contestants—many of them students—didn't all seem to think that money and looks are everything. Maybe it would seem more believable if the show did not segregate black contestants to one program each week. Maybe it would seem more believable if women and men switched roles occasionally.

Maybe it has something to do with the show's name and the myths it creates. I don't know, just maybe.

Andrew Strickman is a writer living in Arkansas whose work has appeared in the *New York Times* and the *Village Voice*.

Really nailing it

Some memorable lines on *Studs*:
"I expected him to look like Bambi."

"Nice clothes, but he'd have looked better without them."

"It was strong and hard and it felt good."

"He sounded like an obscene caller—it turned me on."

"He kept begging me to swallow something rude."

"He was big under his shorts. He was muscular—he had a big muscle."

"I was his for the taking, but he didn't take."

"There's no room in his life for a woman—he's in love with his car."

MEDIA BEAT

By Pat Aufderheide

Christmas in August

Broadcasters got a Christmas present from the Federal Communications Commission when, on August 1, the FCC postponed the effective date for rules limiting the number of commercials that can air on kids' programs. When the FCC pushed back the deadline from October to January, it left regulation-free the golden Christmas-sales season. So when your kid comes up with a wish list brought to you by TV commercials, thank the people that Action for Children's Television head Peggy Charren calls "greedy grinchies" and their compliant regulatory agency. The law to go into effect in January will hold commercials down to a still-awesome 12 minutes an hour weekdays and 10.5 minutes on weekends.

Advertorials on parade

The magazine industry has suffered harshly during the recession and is looking to advertisers to solve its problems. Of course, solutions don't come cheap. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, some magazines are promising advertisers positive articles in exchange for advertising—and a sizable "sponsorship fee," otherwise known as a bribe. Competitors are even suing *Walking Magazine* for bending copy in the direction of Reebok and Rockport. Some magazines skirt the edge of decency with "advertorials," where subtly labeled advertising copy looks strangely like editorial copy.

Terminator for president?

Arnold Schwarzenegger, the Hollywood gossip has it, is considering electoral positions—perhaps the California governorship, if it's open, or a Senate seat. Although he's only following in the footsteps of other screen celebrities such as Ronald Reagan and John Gavin, he would be the most successful star ever (he made \$15 million for *Terminator 2*) to make a political bid.

Vamping the news

In her autobiography, *Fighting for Air: In the Trenches with Television News*, longtime TV network correspondent Liz Trotta tracks the transformation of news delivery into performance art: "For slaughter in Romanian streets, furrowed brows; for newborn pandas, a smile to show personal warmth or a set of new caps; for Vietnam memory-lane stuff, a faintly censorious tilt of the head; for child abuse, fear and loathing in a blank stare. It had been a long journey from covering to vamping the news."

On the cutting edge

Naked Hollywood, a BBC special carried by cable channel Arts & Entertainment, gained notoriety beyond its down-and-dirty insiders' tales when producers Don Simpson and Jerry Bruckheimer stalled out an episode critical of them by refusing to grant rights to clips of their movies. Also of note was the fact that the series was carried on cable and produced by an English production group. One might expect a critical inside look at the industry to come from public television. But at the same time *Naked Hollywood* was showing on A&E, Washington, D.C., station WETA was airing *Hollywood: The Golden Years*, an affectionate tribute to the old RKO studio days.

The little service that couldn't

Last year at this time, it looked like PBS would be the hope of the serious citizen at election time. The Markle Foundation had come in with a promise of \$5 million and some hundreds of thousands of upfront dollars of development money for a project that could fight sound-bite democracy—programming that would make public television a unique, topical and compelling source of information for American voters. Then the long schmooze began, and a year later the answer is in: the Markle Foundation is pulling out its funds in despair. PBS, claimed Markle head Lloyd Morrisett, is so riven with factional infighting and so underfunded that it could not make a commitment to *The Voters Initiative*. Even more embarrassing to PBS executives was the fact that cable services such as CNN rushed to suggest deals. (Several big public-TV stations have also tried to negotiate an independent deal.)

Meanwhile, PBS announced another electoral strategy, apparently in the works for at least nine months: co-production with NBC, with anchor Tom Brokaw joining *The MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour* for a time. At a Los Angeles press conference, representatives from NBC and PBS congratulated themselves on their shared goal of objective news coverage. No wonder Morrisett was disheartened.

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Video games

Continued from page 24

games in Austria is called Pedestrian. You have to murder as many pedestrians as you can hit. It has a lot to do with dehumanization,

which is what these games are all about."

The games created a scandal in Austria recently when a Viennese newspaper conducted a survey and reported that 39 percent of Austrian high schoolers in one city had heard of the video games and 22 percent had played

them. "It was kind of like a wake-up call," says Cooper.

"There's a need for Austrians to start dealing honestly with their Nazi past," Cooper adds. Though Austria was invaded by Germany, Hitler was welcomed by many in the country. The Wiesenthal Center has sent two sets of their Holocaust education exhibit, "Courage to Remember," to Austria for public display and use in the schools.

Hypnotic, not hip: Rabbi Cooper says he fears the games' impact on the awakening democracies of Eastern Europe, where people know little about the Nazi Holocaust. An Austrian right-wing party has recently cited Hitler's anti-foreigner employment policies as a positive model. Could the games become a model for real life? Cooper asks, "What happens if the situation in Yugoslavia really deteriorates and [surrounding countries] are flooded with refugees?"

The video games are a hypnotic tool for indoctrinating youngsters into neo-Nazi philosophy. Distribution has been through deceptive packaging, over-the-counter sales, word of mouth and electronic mail. "We've confirmed that the neo-Nazis in Austria are using electronic mail. But electronic mail gives you messages. Video games are a whole different level," says Cooper. "You can stay in KZ Manager for an hour. It's a very well-thought-out game, very manipulative. The games are visually interactive and engage young people."

Known for tracking down Nazi war criminals, the Wiesenthal Center is offering a \$25,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for the production and distribution of the video games. Customs officials in the U.S. and Canada have been alerted and are on the lookout for games that might be shipped to the U.S.

"If there's going to be any sort of mass attempt to import the games, we think they'll be stopped," says Cooper. "We have an unofficial network around the country monitoring for the early-warning signs of [the video

games) coming to the States."

Ironically, as the neo-Nazi video games spread to other countries, the Wiesenthal Center is able to gather more clues that may lead them to the games' originators. "We know that skinheads in Germany have been involved in distribution," Cooper notes.

Overcoming jaded teens: But despite sounding an international alarm, Cooper is not optimistic that the games will be kept out of the U.S. With shipping channels under close surveillance, he anticipates the appearance of homegrown hate games. "The real question is whether indigenous American versions will appear," he says. "And in all likelihood, [the answer] is 'yes.' It is surprising that we haven't seen it yet."

An obstacle for the games' purveyors may be the sophisticated video tastes of American teenagers. "One thing it needs in the States is money," says Cooper. "If there's an attempt to reach out on the mainstream level, with what it takes to get American kids excited, you're talking about a very substantial financial investment."

Thus far, all the games are in German, which has also limited the potential market. However, the Wiesenthal Center's dean, Rabbi Marvin Hier, says, "The introduction to the newest of the games says, 'To all friends of National Socialism, be on the lookout: an English version of this game will follow shortly.'"

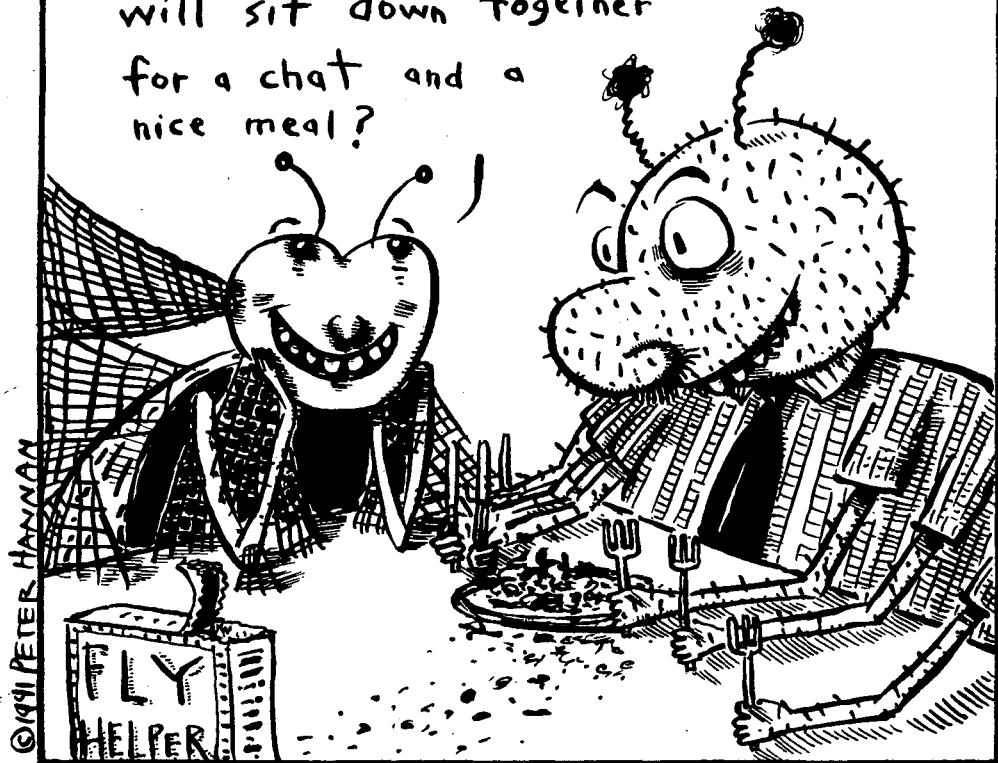
One possibility is that existing games might be translated into other languages, retaining the graphics. But Cooper says, "In order to do that, you have to have access to the original programming. With the authorities starting to pay attention, [it would be hard to] produce it in Germany and ship it off to the States."

The Wiesenthal Center plans to fight the video games with education, not censorship. Cooper says, "The way we'll have to deal with that kind of hate is the same way we deal with songs that promote hate, books that deny the Holocaust happened. In America, you're not going to legislate hate out of existence."

Carol Tice is a writer living in Los Angeles.

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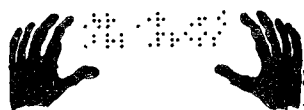
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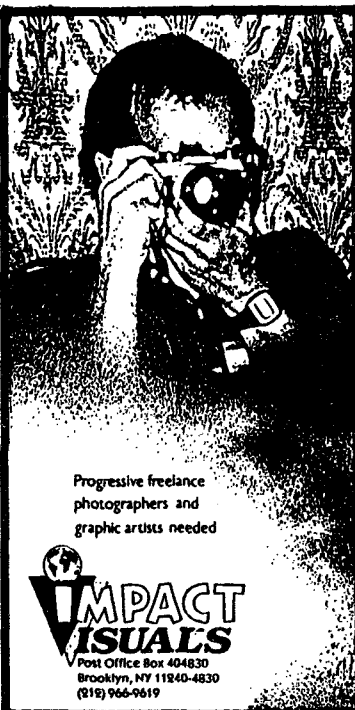
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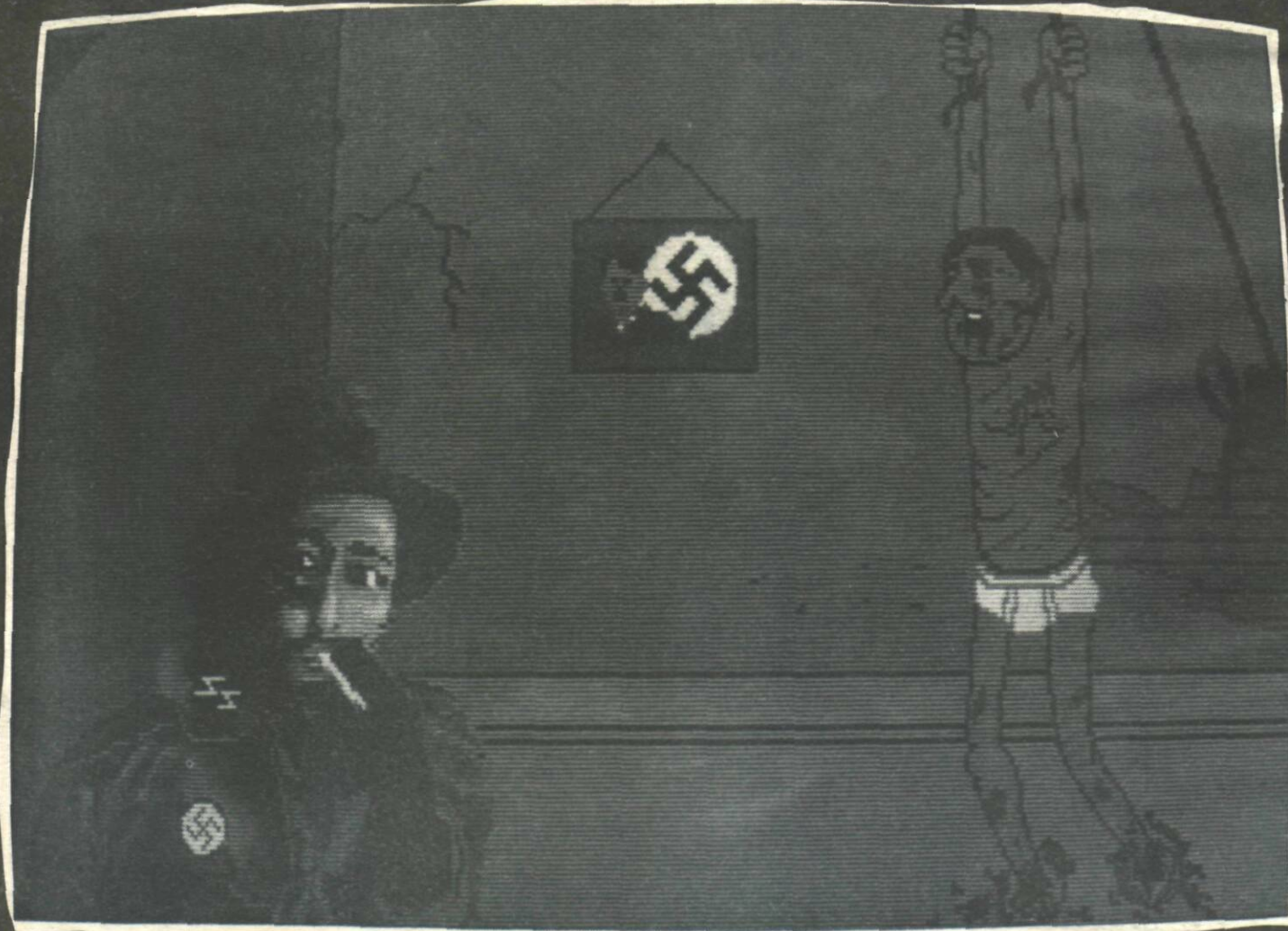
GHOULISH GAMES

By Carol Tice



Photo courtesy Simon Wiesenthal Center

Neo-Nazi vidiots play with fire.



What's the latest craze with the youth of Western Europe? Nazi video games. That's right—more than 140 different electronic hate games have appeared in Germany, Austria, Holland and, most recently, France. An international movement, spearheaded by the Simon Wiesenthal Center, is organizing to stop the spread of the games and to prosecute their creators.

According to Rabbi Abraham Cooper, associate dean of the Los Angeles-based Wiesenthal Center, video games espousing neo-Nazi views first appeared as early as 1986 but were primitive, quiz-format games that attracted little attention. More recently, though, games have turned up sporting high-quality interactive visuals.

"One of the things that bothers us particularly is to see the development in the program—the visuals are improving to make it more attractive," says Cooper. "A lot of kids are on Prodigy, [and] they're using electronic mail. It's something the younger generation likes and something the neo-Nazis connected with in a very profound way."

Ghastly tally: In a typical game, Cooper says, "you get more points for answering like a good Aryan. If you don't, you end up in a concentration camp." In one game, after you gas someone a message appears in German: "The gas has taken effect and you have freed Germany of these parasites." Players may earn points and replays by killing people or selling the gold fillings of the dead and lamp shades of human skin.

Jews are not the only objects of violence and hate in the neo-Nazi video games. "Among the people who are targets are homosexuals, the homeless, ecologists," says Cooper. "On the game KZ [concentration camp] Manager, you're gassing Turks. One of the most popular

Continued on page 22